

Canon!Tommy in a vigilante AU what will he do??

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Canon!Tommy in a vigilante AU what will he do??

by [Smallest](#)

Summary

After Dream broke out of prison and immediately tormented Tommy back in the place of his second exile, one could say Tommy was having a bit of a bad time. Enter Drista.

-or-

Drista sends Tommy to an alternate universe where things are *very* different. Our favorite traumatized child soldier must now navigate a world of heroes, villains, and everything in between! He will also utilize Minecraft mechanics from his world to their full potential, creating chaos along the way.

Notes

[Character] gets punted into an AU is one of my favorite tropes, so here! Also did my best to come up with powers/secret identities for almost everyone that I haven't already seen before.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Drista is Helping™

This didn't feel real. Now, Tommy was no stranger to nightmares. One might even call him an expert on them at this point. He was well aware the pain he had felt could not have registered properly if this were simply a scenario his brain had created to torment him. Even knowing the truth, though, it was still difficult to grasp that this was reality. He certainly fucking wished it wasn't.

Dream had actually escaped. Tommy had had so many nightmares about it, and they finally came true. Even if he had gotten away, gotten to the safety of the Arctic and then to his home, it still felt like he was back there. Back in Logstedshire, listening to Dream's unhinged ramblings and horrible threats. The twisted smile Dream had fixed him with after stepping out from behind the broken portal frame was burned into his mind. He could still see it every time he shut his eyes.

Tommy was doing slightly better now, at least. He had a full set of netherite armor from Sam, and a netherite sword from Eryn. Ranboo (was it Boo now?) had even given him a "Rapple." There were walls around his property. Tommy knew full well that the walls would do practically nothing against Dream. They weren't tall enough to be more than a minor inconvenience, and the yellow concrete could be easily mined. That didn't change the fact that the familiarity of being surrounded by black and yellow walls brought him a feeling of safety, though.

Phil and Quackity and Boo and Eryn had all offered their support. The reminder that Dream was wrong, that Tommy wasn't alone, definitely helped. The lighthearted conversation, the time sat listening to the discs and watching the sunset, it had calmed him. For a moment, he was almost able to forget that Dream would be coming to hunt him down and torture him at any moment.

That artificial calm shattered abruptly when he was suddenly met by the sight of lime green and porcelain white, right in front of his face. Were it not for Phil's steady presence at his side, Tommy might've had a panic attempt then and there. Taking a moment to calm himself, he realized that it wasn't Dream standing in front of him. He couldn't help but sigh in relief when that fact finally registered.

"Ayup, Drista!" Tommy said, plastering on the best fake grin he could muster.

"You're shaking." She replied dryly.

Tommy scoffed indignantly. "And whose fucking fault is that?"

"You were shaking before I made myself visible. Don't blame this on me."

Phil looked between Tommy and the young goddess in confusion. He looked like he was opening his mouth to speak, when his head suddenly snapped to Ranboo. The ghost was singing, and looked like he was about to dance. Phil rushed over to stop him, leaving Tommy and Drista to their conversation.

“Well Dream escaped from prison, the fucking bastard.” Tommy shoved his hands into the pockets of his coat to hide their increasing tremors.

Drista drew in a sharp breath. “Cringe. I could help you, if you want.”

Those words made Tommy feel significantly lighter. He currently needed all the help he could get, and having aid from a goddess might actually be enough to keep him safe. The smile on his face became a bit more genuine and he nodded enthusiastically.

The chaos goddess clapped her hands together. “Oh, I’ve got a great idea! See you later, child!”

“What-“ was all that Tommy managed to say before the ground opened up beneath him, casting him into darkness.

Tommy woke up slowly for the first time in... he honestly couldn’t remember how long. He’d awoken feeling confused and annoyed, but he had no idea *why* at the moment. He also had a dull throbbing headache, which he immediately realized was from hitting his head on something. He couldn’t remember *what*, though.

Slowly, his memories returned to him. Dream escaping prison. Dream promising to make his life a living hell. Being chased. Phil walking him home. Talking to Drista. Drista offering help. Falling. What the fuck had Drista done? When the goddess offered to assist him, he had expected a weapon or something. Maybe a totem if she was feeling generous. Not... whatever the hell *this* was!

He moved the sword from Eryn to his hotbar, and quickly checked to make sure he still had his armor on. He did. The next step was taking in his surroundings. He had woken up slumped against a wall in what seemed to be a dirty alleyway. Drista really did pick the loveliest place to drop him. The area wasn’t anywhere he recognized on the server, but it could be something newly built. He wasn’t sure *why* someone would choose to make a gross alley, but the people on the server *were* pretty fucking weird.

Dragging himself to his feet, he cautiously began to make his way out of the alley. The faint sounds of people talking slowly grew louder the closer he got to the entrance. He tensed, preparing to draw his sword if necessary. Shockingly, Tommyinnit was not the most *popular* person on the server.

Finally exiting the narrow and grimey space he’s woken up in, he found himself standing on a well-worn sidewalk. Definitely not a new build, then. Turning towards the source of the voices he had heard earlier, what he saw made him freeze in shock.

In front of him, looking at least six years younger and significantly happier, was Fundy. That wasn’t the thing that left Tommy gaping though, no. That was because of the person Fundy was speaking with. Quackity. Tommy’s reaction was solely due to Quackity’s scar, or rather, lack thereof. Tommy knew a lot about scars. He was practically coated in them. One thing he knew full well is that a severe scar like that never goes away completely. No amount of healing or regen could ever get rid of that kind of scar once it's formed.

The two stuttered to a stop in front of Tommy, looking at him with ~~pity~~ concern. Belatedly, Tommy realized he had probably still had a bloody nose from his encounter with Dream. Honestly, though. Why were they looking at him like that? One bloody nose isn't that big of a deal?

"Kid... why are you wearing full plate armor?" Quackity asked hesitantly.

Tommy gave him a look that he hoped conveyed the full extent of his incredulity. "Why *wouldn't* I be wearing armor? And- how the fuck do you have two eyes!?"

The duck hybrid seemed confused by the question, for whatever reason. "I- I was born with them?"

"No, yeah, but you got one of them torn out, right?"

"*No?* I think I would know if I got one of my fucking eyes ripped out!"

Fundy's tail lashed back and forth behind him. Looking at Tommy with a strange expression, he asked. "Are you- like- are you *okay?*"

Tommy laughed humorlessly. "Nah. Haven't been since before L'manberg, big man."

"L'manberg?" Fundy seemed confused.

Like pieces of a puzzle clicking together, Tommy suddenly managed to connect several facts and come to a realization.

Fact 1: Drista (a literal goddess) had promised to "help" and then sent Tommy into a weird hole in the ground.

Fact 2: He had woken up somewhere totally unfamiliar.

Fact 3: Fundy and Quackity both looked younger. Quackity was missing his scar.

Fact 4: Neither of them seemed to know his name, but they clearly knew each other.

Fact 5: They didn't show a single ounce of recognition when Tommy said "L'manberg."

All of this added up to: Drista had sent him to a fucking alternate universe. Apparently *this* was her definition of help. Wonderful.

Tommy leaned his head back and ran both hands down his face in an exasperated motion. "Prime fucking dammit, Drista!"

Tommy gets a job

"Prime fucking dammit, Drista!"

Quackity's hand twitched as he started to reach towards the kid, before thinking better of it. Based on heavy bags under his eyes and the scars on his face, this kid had been through some shit. Best to err on the side of caution, to avoid accidentally startling him.

Quackity had just been (covertly) discussing some "business" with Fundy, when they had stumbled upon this kid. He couldn't be older than 18, and he quite frankly looked *horrible*. His blond hair was greasy and matted, there was dried blood on his face, and the way he held himself was tense and anxious. Quackity would love to have a little *talk* with whoever the hell hurt this kid.

The kid gave his head a quick shake and sighed before saying "Name's Tommy. It looks like I'm fuckin' stuck here."

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Fundy shift anxiously. "Uhh... what's a Drista?"

The ki- *Tommy* let out a small chuckle. "She's a friend of mine. Offered to help me, and apparently in her mind knocking me out and dropping me here counts as help. I guess she *did* technically get me away from *him* though, so..." He trailed off.

Quackity's mind honed in on that last sentence with laser focus. Not to be overprotective of a kid he had just met, but he would like to know who he would be targeting next. "Who's 'him?'" He asked, trying to sound casual.

Tommy gave a very forced laugh and plastered on the fakest smile Quackity had ever seen. That was saying something, given how many businessmen Quackity had spoken with.

"Let's talk about something else now, boys!"

Deciding not to push, Quackity gave a charming grin and held out a hand. "Well, it's nice to meet you Tommy! I'm Quackity, owner of the Golden Goose casino."

Tommy shook his hand hesitantly. Quackity gave Fundy a sharp elbow, silently telling him to introduce himself. The fox hybrid rubbed his side indignantly, shooting Quackity a quick glare before turning his attention back to Tommy.

Fundy gave a short, awkward wave. "I'm Fundy Minecraft. I'm- uh- Quackity's friend's son. He's watching me today."

Tommy cocked an eyebrow. "How old are you?"

"Sixteen? Why?" Fundy asked.

Tommy seemed weirdly taken aback. “And your dad still has someone watch you when you go out? I was already living on my own by the time I was thirteen!”

The longer they talked to this kid, the more concerned he felt. Where were his parents? Though, given what Tommy had said earlier, he might not have had great ones. Quackity couldn’t help but feel a slight urge to adopt him.

“That’s fucked up. You know that, right?”

Tommy stared at him blankly.

“*Right?*” Quackity asked with a hint of desperation.

The kid just shrugged at him. “Just how it is, big man.”

Quackity reached a hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose. This *fucking* kid. He had to admit, it was vaguely impressive in a concerning way how casual this kid managed to act while looking so beaten down. Given the *glowing* plate mail armor Tommy was wearing, Quackity probably would’ve assumed he was some new vigilante or something were it not for the distinct lack of facial covering. He assumed the armor was probably something his power let him manifest, since it didn’t seem to be made of any material Quackity had ever seen.

Thoughts of the weird armor aside, Quackity thought back to what the kid had said earlier and realized something important. “You said your friend just dropped you off here... do you have anywhere to stay?”

Tommy shrugged. “I can just build myself another dirt shack or something. ‘S fine.”

Alright, no. Nope. Not on Quackity’s watch! He wasn’t *soft* by any means, but he wasn’t gonna let some kid who already looked beaten to hell just sleep on the streets. Or, based on the words “dirt shack,” in some park. The duck hybrid knew exactly what it was like to be out on your own so young, and it wasn’t good.

“There’s a spare room in my house. You can stay there, at least until you find somewhere else.”

The kid’s brow furrowed. “I don’t need your pity.”

“It’s not pity- I-“ Quackity glanced at Fundy, who was just standing there looking awkward, and an idea struck. Of course!

Quackity clapped his hands together, politely ignoring the way Tommy slightly flinched. “You could work for me, at my casino! We’re a bit short-staffed at the moment.”

The kid’s eyes lit up a tiny bit. “That does sound pretty pogchamp...”

Quackity smiled “It does! Wait- how old are you again?”

Tommy tilted his head to the side. “Seventeen?”

“Ehhh, laws are just suggestions to me anyways. I’m sure it’s fine!” He said with a dismissive wave.

Tommy actually laughed at that, which made Quackity feel a bit better. Sue him, he was worried about the little guy. Looking back towards Fundy, he realized that it was about time he started taking the kid back. Quackity did *not* want to get chewed out for being late again.

“Wilbur will have my head if I don’t get you home in time.” Turning back towards Tommy, he said “Can you come with us? I promise it will only take a few minutes, I just gotta drop him off real quick.”

Tommy looked somewhat reluctant, something unreadable in his eyes when Quackity had said Wilbur’s name. After a couple moments, though, he gave a hesitant nod.

The ride to Wilbur’s was short and incredibly awkward. He tried a few times to include Tommy in conversation, but to no avail. It was mostly Fundy and Quackity conversing while Quackity’s newest illegally employed minor stared out the window. The kid also apparently hadn’t known what a seatbelt was, which was yet another concerning thing to add to the list.

They finally arrived, and Fundy got out of the car. He waved a quick goodbye before bouncing up to his house. Pulling a u-turn in Wilbur’s driveway, Quackity started heading home. The car was full of stifling silence for a couple minutes, before someone finally spoke.

“I’m from an alternate universe!” Tommy blurted out without warning.

Quackity nearly crashed the car.

Chatting in the car

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy anxiously drummed his fingers against the car door. Quackity had noticeably tensed after Tommy's confession, and he was beginning to wonder if he'd made a mistake in telling him. Sure, he felt like he could trust his world's Quackity but... this was a fully different person. Even if he had the same voice and name and shit, he wasn't *Quackity*. What makes someone themselves is their unique lived experience, and even having been in this world so briefly Tommy could tell it was *drastically* different.

The decision to tell Quackity the truth had definitely been an impulsive one. He just wanted some help. Navigating an entire new world on his own with no clue as to how things worked would be stressful enough even if he were in a good mental state. This seemed to be a non-whitelist server, based on the sheer number of people he'd seen on the streets as they drove. For some reason nobody seemed to be wearing armor, which Tommy found a bit odd. Didn't these people know that attacks can come at any time from any direction?

He caught Quackity's eye as the duck hybrid glanced at him using the car's rear view mirror. "Sorry- wow, that's a lot to process... Uh... an alternate universe, huh?"

"Yeah. There's other versions of you and Fundy there. Wilbur too."

At very least, Quackity hadn't called him a liar outright. He could tell that he didn't fully believe him, but Tommy supposed that was understandable. He himself probably wouldn't believe the shit about alternate universes if it weren't for Wilbur having told him about them. Apparently Phil traveled between universes sometimes. Old people are weird.

"Oh, is that so? What are they like?"

Tommy winced a bit. Yeah, he was definitely gonna be sugarcoating this. He didn't want this Quackity to get all pitying and shit. His mind raced as he tried to decide who to start with. Also when, that was important. Maybe a few anecdotes from before things started spiraling downhill. That would hopefully be enough to satisfy the man's curiosity.

"Well, me and Wilbur sold drugs together for a bit. Those were the good old days." Tommy said with an audible smile.

Quackity burst out into laughter. "Oh my *god*, that's amazing. Wilbur selling drugs." Quackity shook his head in an amused manner. "The *irony*!"

"Irony? What is he, a cop or some shit?"

"Hero, actually." Quackity said casually.

Hero? The fuck was that supposed to mean?

Tommy decided to voice the thought. “The fuck is that supposed to mean?”

“Wh- you don’t have heroes in your universe?” Quackity asked incredulously.

Do you wanna be a hero, Tommy?

“Nope. No heroes. That’s like, a fiction thing. Like Greek mythology and shit.”

“Huh. What about villains?”

Are we the villains? In this story?

“I mean, some of the people did fucked up shit that I’d consider straight up villainous...”

If I control the things people are attached to, then I can control the server again!

“I don’t really know what you mean by that though, big Q.”

What he could see of Quackity’s face reflected in the mirror was thoughtful. Hopefully the guy would believe him about the alternate universe thing now. Tommy would also very much like to know what he was talking about in regards to heroes and villains. He couldn’t deny that both of those words put him a bit on edge.

“Ok, so in this- uh- universe, I guess? We have heroes and villains. God, it’s weird thinking about that *not* being a thing. Uh- how do I explain...”

“What- what defines a hero or villain?” Tommy asked.

“So hero is easy! It’s someone employed by the government to arrest villains and criminals, as well as vigilantes. Though, I guess both villains and vigilantes *technically* count as criminals.” Quackity explained.

Wow, a government job called “hero?” Technoblade would absolutely hate this place. He’d probably attempt to blow up this entire universe. Tommy mentally chuckled at the image of one pig trying to destroy a whole dimension.

“What about villains, then? And vigilantes?”

“Villains are basically just big name criminals. Vigilantes are like heroes, but illegal. Honestly, vigilantes do more to protect people than most heroes do. And not all villains are necessarily *bad*.” Quackity sighed. “People tend to see things in black and white. Hero good, villain bad. That’s not how real life works, though.”

Tommy nodded, before realizing that Quackity was still focused on driving and would not see it. “Makes sense. People always try to simplify shit. ‘Oh, L’manberg was bad, mehmehmeh they tried to publicly execute a guy!’ They don’t see that it’s more complicated than that!”

“I’m sorry, did you just say *publicly execute!*?”

“Moving on-“

“I would like to focus on the pub-“

“MOVING. *ON.*”

Quackity sighed heavily, but made no attempt to prevent Tommy from smoothly and gracefully changing the subject. He mentally reached for a conversation topic, before landing on something Quackity had said earlier.

“Wilbur is a hero here?”

Quackity was silent for a few seconds. “So technically I was not supposed to tell you that...”

Tommy laughed. “Don’t worry big Q, I’m not a fuckin’ snitch.”

The relief was visible in Quackity’s posture. “Thank god... I don’t want to give Wilbur another excuse to lecture me.” In a high pitched voice, Quackity mockingly said “Ohhh Quackity, you can’t employ a minor at a casino! Ohhh Quackity, give that back it’s mine! Ohhh Quackity, don’t give my son weapons!”

“What a little bitch. Laws are for pussies!” Tommy said between laughs.

Quackity grinned brightly. “Exactly! I’m glad you get it, Tommy.”

He smiled at the praise. Turning his attention back out the window, he noticed that they were approaching a fairly nice looking house. The lawn was a bit wild and overgrown, but in a charming way. There were white tulips growing in large planters outside the windows. As for the house itself, it was fairly large. Nothing compared to Tubbo and Ranboob’s mansion, of course, but more than spacious enough for several people to live comfortably.

Quackity parked the car, unbuckled himself, and exited the vehicle. Following his lead, Tommy did the same. The short walk up to the door gave Tommy time to really look over this version of Quackity. He looked a bit younger, and a lot happier. Even when he was looking at Tommy with concern, he was much more relaxed than Tommy had ever seen him since before the elections. The only visible scar Tommy could see on him was a small nick on his chin. He carried himself with the same confidence as the Quackity Tommy knew, but it was a lot less cautious. He was also dressed in a finely ironed black and white suit, for some reason.

They reached the door. Quackity reached for the handle, but hesitated all of a sudden. He turned to Tommy and gave an anxious laugh.

“I may have possibly forgotten that I would need to inform my boyfriends of the feral teenager I found that will now be staying with us...”

Y'all don't even KNOW how many fic ideas are currently bouncing around my skull. In addition to my many many god-tier AU ideas, I am so incredibly tempted to make a series of oneshots inspired by different inspirobot quotes...

Speedrunning a found family

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy shifted anxiously. “Uh... hey... Big Q?”

Quackity, who still had his hand rested on the doorknob, turned to him. “Yeah?”

“Do you mind... maybe... *not* mentioning the alternate universe thing to anybody else?”

The duck hybrid blinked in surprise. “Oh. Uh- sure. You promised not to tell anyone I kinda leaked Wilbur’s secret identity, so it’s only fair.”

The teen sighed in relief. “Thanks big man.”

“No problem!” Quackity turned back to the door.

As he pulled the door open, Tommy could hear the sound of a voice he didn’t recognize. There was a strange quality to it, similar to the slight distortion that you get on call with comms. Was somebody on a call?

“-uildings in the inner ring have been blown up by notorious villain Nuke. Reports confirm no fatalities, with all 12 injured persons expected to make a full rec-”

The voice cut off abruptly, and there was the sound of shuffling. Footsteps quickly approached, revealing the person inside the house to be this world’s version of Sapnap. Much like Quackity and Fundy, he looked significantly happier than his Dream SMP counterpart. Sapnap glanced between Tommy and Quackity in obvious confusion.

“Hey, Quacks. Who’s the kid?”

“I am *not* a fuckin’ kid-“

Quackity scratched the back of his head, giving a nervous smile. “So... I may have impulsively adopted a random teenager I found on the street...”

“Wait- hold on-“

Tommy’s protests were once again ignored as Sapnap stepped forwards. Placing both of his hands on his boyfriend’s shoulders, he said. “No, Quackity. *We* impulsively adopted a random teenager you found on the street.”

“FUCKING- ADOPTED!? I DID NOT AGREE TO THIS!” Tommy shouted.

Sapnap turned to Tommy with a giant grin. “Shh... it’s okay son. I know this is a lot to process.”

The teen put both his hands over his face. “WHAT THE FUCK!?”

Quackity took on a thoughtful expression. “You know how I offered you a job at my casino?”

“...Yes?”

“I’ll pay you extra if you don’t argue when I tell people you’re my son.” The duck hybrid said cheerfully.

Tommy sighed as dramatically as he could manage. “Fine. Only for the money.”

Quackity and Sapnap both threw their arms in the air. “LET’S GOOOO! WE’VE GOT A SON!”

Yeah, this world was fucking weird. Tommy was now being paid to pretend to be the child of these people. He wished he could tell Tubbo about this. He would find it hilarious.

Quackity slung an arm over Tommy’s shoulder, which could not have been a comfortable experience given the netherite armor he was wearing. He glanced at the duck hybrid questioningly. The feral smile on Quackity’s face was nothing if not suspicious.

“Would you like to mess with Wilbur?” He asked innocently.

Tommy nodded enthusiastically and without hesitation. Quackity led him to a couch, and motioned for Tommy to sit. From the corner of his eye, he saw Sapnap heading into another room to the left of the one they were in.

Making an impulsive decision, Tommy returned his armor to his inventory. It was more comfortable for him and he could always just put it back on if needed. Plus, neither Sapnap or Quackity were wearing any armor. He was probably safe here.

The shorter man glanced at him in surprise, before pulling some sort of device from his pocket. It looked vaguely like a comm, but smaller and thinner. When he pressed a button near the bottom, the device lit up. It displayed a picture of Quackity with his two boyfriends, all three smiling brightly. Tommy watched in fascination as Quackity pressed six numbers seemingly at random in a well practiced motion, and the display on the device changed. He tapped a green icon near the bottom of the screen, and a list of names popped up.

Emo Loser Idiot

Foolish

Fox Boy

Goop Man

Kamrl 💜💚

Piggy

Purpled

Sbapmap 💖🐼

Without hesitation, Quackity tapped on “Emo Loser Idiot” and the device began to make a ringing sound. The screen turned dark gray, displaying a few white buttons. This thing was

weird. They waited for a few moments, before a loading symbol appeared dead center of the screen. Suddenly, Wilbur's face popped up. To say Tommy was confused would be an understatement. What the hell *was* this thing?

"*What do you want, Quackity?*" Wilbur said with no real annoyance.

Wilbur's face moved along with the words. It was almost as if they were actually talking face to face. What?

"Hey Wilbur! You know that whole 'being a father' thing you do?" Quackity asked brightly.

"...*That has got to be one of the weirdest ways you could have possibly phrased it. Yes?*"

"I decided to try it!" Quackity pulled Tommy towards him, tilting the device towards the teen. Looking at the screen, Tommy could see himself in the corner.

Not wanting to waste his opportunity, Tommy quickly said "Hi Wil-bitch!"

Quackity laughed. "This is Tommy! I found him outside and decided he was my son, so I brought him home."

"*I- You what!? That's- That's illegal, Quackity!*"

The duck hybrid in question waved dismissively. "Laws are made to be broken."

Wilbur looked as the he had aged a decade in only a few moments. "*No, Quackity. They are literally not. Nothing is made to be broken!*"

"Glow sticks." The duck hybrid retorted without hesitation.

Tommy nodded. "Blocks."

"Piñatas."

"Friendships." Tommy added.

Quackity frowned, momentarily glancing at the teen before turning his attention back towards Wilbur. "...Karate boards."

"Trust."

He looked back at Tommy. "I'm putting you in therapy."

"Ah, yes. Therapy." Tommy nodded sagely. "It's very good. I had a therapist for a bit. Lovely woman, one of the one people I've ever met who hasn't wanted me dead. Or outright tried to kill me!"

"...*Quackity where the fuck did you find this kid?*"

"Outside!" He replied happily.

Eyes still fixed intently on the screen, Tommy saw Fundy attempting to peek over Wilbur's shoulder. "*Who are you talking t- Oh! Hi Tommy!*"

Wilbur whipped around so fast it was a surprise he didn't snap his neck. "*Fundy, you know this guy!?*"

Sensing the opportunity to be hilarious, Tommy said: "We fought in a war together."

Fundy was visibly confused. He shot Wilbur a quickly glance, and then gained an evil smirk. Choosing to fuck with his father, he responded "*War is hell.*"

Quackity and Tommy were both cackling at this point, while Wilbur looked completely Done™ with their bullshit.

"Well! Seeya Wilbur!" Quackity chirped.

"*You can NOT just hang u-*" Wilbur was cut off by Quackity hanging up.

"Holy shit Tommy, you're amazing. I could not ask for a better son."

Tommy turned his head to the side to hide his smile. Dammit, he was getting attached.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur would like A Break

Calling Kamrl

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

After the fun of messing with an alternate version of Wilbur had worn off, Tommy realized he was exhausted. Apparently running for your life from your abuser and then getting teleported to an alternate universe without warning tired you out. Who would've guessed.

Apparently noticing the fact that he was struggling to keep his eyes open, Quackity spoke. "Do you want me to show you to the spare room?"

Tommy nodded gratefully. Quackity led him down a hallway to the right of the living room, explaining each of the doors they passed.

"That's Karl's office, but we mostly use it as a place to store books. This one to the left is the bathroom. The door with the burn marks at the bottom is yours... we can get that fixed at some point--"

"It's all good. People set my house on fire or blow it up all the time, so a little damage on the door doesn't bug me."

Quackity looked concerned again. Weird. "I- okay. We can come back to that later. For now do you- uh- do you have pajamas?"

Tommy gave him an unimpressed stare. "Ah yes, I carry around a set of pajamas at all times like everybody else."

The duck hybrid laughed. "Ok yeah, fair. That was a bit of a stupid question. I'll give you some of Karl's, since you're the closest in height. Everything he owns is oversized too."

The teen shifted anxiously. "Are you sure? He'll be fine with that?"

"It's *Karl*, he won't care. What kind of father would he be if he wasn't even willing to temporarily loan his son something to sleep in?"

Again with the son thing. Tommy groaned. "Alright. If you're sure."

Quackity walked off to the room at the end of the hall, presumably to retrieve the pajamas. While he waited, Tommy figured he might as well check out the room he'd be staying in. Aside from the scorch marks on the door, the place was very clean. It had obviously never been used, and there wasn't much inside other than the bed. There weren't even any chests to put stuff in.

The room was also very dark, with no visible lanterns or torches. Embedded in the wall next to the door was a tiny lever. Curious, he flicked it to see what would happen. He jumped in surprise as bright light filled the room. Redstone lighting? That's pretty fucking cool.

Glancing out the window, he realized it was still midday. Ah well. He was far too big a man to worry about things like sleep schedules.

Quackity returned a few moments later, bringing him some bright purple pajamas. He said a quick goodnight before leaving Tommy to get some rest. It was really weird that Quackity was doing so much for him, especially since he was basically a complete stranger. Tommy really hoped it wasn't out of pity, but quite honestly he wasn't in much of a position to turn down the help even if that were the case.

He quickly changed into the borrowed pajamas and flipped the tiny lever again, returning the room to darkness. Climbing into the bed, Tommy noted that it was probably softer than any bed he'd ever slept in. With a sigh, he shut his eyes and tried to sleep.

Now that the kid had gone to bed (at 2 in the afternoon, but Quackity wasn't one to judge) he stopped to contemplate his recent decisions. Now, one may argue that adopting a random teenager from an alternate dimension on a whim was "reckless" or "irresponsible." They would be correct, too.

He didn't regret taking Tommy in in the slightest. The kid had nowhere to go, and was clearly not doing well. What was Quackity gonna do, just leave him there? As someone who grew up on the streets in the outer ring, he knew how tough it could be to get by when you didn't have anyone looking out for you. Were it not for his power, Quackity would probably still be in the outer ring at very least, even if he weren't still homeless.

Also, he never would've met his boyfriends, and that would be a real tragedy. They'd only been together for a year and he already couldn't imagine a life without them. Call him cheesy, but he really felt like Karl and Sapnap were his soulmates.

Speaking of Karl, Quackity should really give him a call to let him know of their new son. Yes, Tommy was their son now. It was too late. The kid had agreed to stop arguing about it in return for money, and Quackity was planning to exploit the hell out of that. From what little he's seen, the kid was smart and funny as hell. A perfect fit. Also, he was pretty sure the illegal adoption was going to give Wilbur an aneurysm.

...What was he doing again? Oh! Right! Calling Karl. Really, of all the times for him to be off bothering George, did it have to be on the day he became a father? Incredibly irresponsible of him. Clicking on the contact labeled "Kamrl 💜💚" Quackity impatiently waited for his boyfriend to pick up.

"Q?"

"Karlos! Good news, you're a dad now!"

"Oh cool!"

There was a long moment of silence.

"Wait, what?"

“I found a kid and decided to keep him. He’s our son now.”

“*Nice. What size?*”

Quackity couldn’t help but laugh. “What?”

“*Like how old?*”

“I- he’s seventeen, did you say what *size*?” Quackity asked incredulously.

“*Shut up! I forgot the word! I’m bad at words!*” Karl whined.

“Karlos, my love, you are literally a professional journalist.”

“*And?*”

“...Fair enough. How’s *George*?” Quackity said the man’s name in the worst British accent he could muster.

“*I’m asking him about the drugs thing, but he’s ignoring me. Probably doesn’t want me to write an article about it. All like ‘Karl, I’m a hero, you’re gonna ruin my reputation’*” Karl did his own poor imitation of George’s voice, sending Quackity into a fit of laughter.

“It’s not your fault that half his fighting style is giving people drugs!”

“*Exactly! That’s what I said!*”

“Oh! Anyways! Our son is named Tommy and he’s taller than you.”

“*Can’t believe I’m no longer the tallest person in our household. Worst day of my life.*” Karl pouted.

“Ah yes, how tragic.”

“*No, you don’t know what it feels like! You’ve always been shor-*”

Quackity hung up.

Chapter End Notes

Karl Jacobs enjoyers come get your juice! Also yes in the AU Karlnapity are very happy with good communication because I Said So.

Sweet Dreams :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy snapped his eyes open. He couldn't pinpoint why, but he was immediately on high alert. Something was wrong. His gaze flicked back and forth erratically, searching for whatever threat had woken him so abruptly. His heart was pounding in his chest painfully. The room around him was slightly blurred, for some reason. He probably would've focused on that, were it not for something much more urgent grabbing his attention.

*A bone-chilling laugh echoed through the room. It seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It was familiar, **too familiar**. He knew this laugh well. Far better than he would like to.*

*The sound filled him with an intense fear. His blood turned cold in his veins. Icy terror constricted around his throat like a python. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't **breathe-***

"Aw, Tommy. Did you really think you could get away from me?" The tone was sickly sweet, a poor imitation of something lighthearted.

He could see him now. That eye-searing shade of lime green, the porcelain mask. A deceptively open posture, though Tommy could see the underlying tension. He held the axe of peace in one hand, leaning on the weapon which was propped against the floor. Tommy wasn't sure how he'd approached without it registering, but that didn't really matter now. He was here.

*He should run. No, he **had** to run. He had to run, and yet he couldn't. His body ignored his commands, remaining firmly in place. He was still as a statue, despite everything within him screaming to **go, get out, escape while you still can-***

*"What, did you think you were **safe**?" Dream taunted. "You thought that when I got locked up in prison, too. I've already proven you wrong twice. Do you really need me to do it again?"*

*Dream leaned forward, and he **close, too close, no no no get away stop-***

*He laughed again. "I'm a god, remember? There's nowhere you can run that I won't find you. You'll never be **safe**, Tommy."*

Tommy was trembling so hard, it felt like he would shake apart into pieces. That would probably be preferable to whatever Dream had in store for him. The pinprick eyes of that mask bore into his soul, noting every flaw and weakness to exploit.

"Maybe I made a mistake, in that prison. Bringing you back so quickly. I think you could do with a bit more time in limbo, don't you?"

Dream stalked forward, every movement precise and calculated. Tommy felt like a mouse under a cat's paws. Released, given glimpses of hope, only to be met with sharp teeth and claws again and again. Had he ever really escaped exile? Or had it just been Dream toying with him all along?

Finally, he managed to choke out a reply. "No- Fuck you. Fuck you! You can't- Quackity will-"

*"Quackity?" Dream chuckled. "You really believe Quackity is going to save you? **Who do you think let me in?**"*

Tommy's voice shook despite his best efforts. "He- he wouldn't! You're fucking lying!"

"Oh, Tommy. Did you think he cared about you?" Dream stepped forward, placing a hand on Tommy's cheek in a mockery of comfort.

*Try as he might, he couldn't pull away. He couldn't so much as flinch. The touch burned, searing into his flesh like a hot iron. He hated it. He hated it. He hated it. He wanted him **off!***

"Nobody cares about you, Tommy. I thought I taught you that in exile." Dream tilted his head to the side. "Do you need a reminder?"

Tommy tried to spit more insults, but they died in his throat. All he managed was a pathetic choked sob.

"Let's see if anyone mourns, when I bring them your corpse!" Dream chirped, raising his axe.

He could do nothing but sit and stare wide-eyed as the blade drew closer. It made impact with his face and-

Tommy woke up, soaked in sweat and gasping for air. He didn't scream, though. That was a habit he'd long grown out of. ~~Dream always hated when he woke up screaming from nightmares.~~

He lay on the bed, still recovering. He managed to get his breathing under control after about a minute. The tremors in his hands persisted, though. He had nightmares most nights, but not ones like this. Usually they were a chaotic replay of every terrible thing that had ever happened in his life, all blended together. This, though. It was so *real*. Prime, it had felt like he was actually *there!*

He triple-checked that he had a sword and shield in his hotbar before standing up. He debated equipping his armor, ultimately deciding against it. His body still ached all over, covered in the barely healed axe wounds he'd received during the chase in logstedshire. While eating had been enough to close up the cuts, they would still hurt for a few more days unless he got a health or regen pot.

The act of getting out of bed took a monumental effort, exhaustion weighing down his limbs like lead. It reminded him uncomfortably of his inability to move in his latest nightmare.

There was very little he hated more than the sensation of being trapped. His claustrophobia had only gotten worse throughout the course of his life. He'd had many bad experiences with being trapped. Nothing good ever came from being unable to flee.

He'd been trapped in the final control room, cut down before he had the chance to run.

He'd been trapped between two pistons in Pogtopia, pleading for help as the shell of what was once his brother laughed cruelly.

He'd been trapped in Logstedshire, living under Dream's thumb. Under his control.

He'd been trapped in the prison, begging for someone, anyone, to save him as Dream used a fucking potato to shatter his bones and paint the obsidian walls with blood.

All of that considered, Tommy preferred to always have an escape route. A way out. He wasn't a coward, but there were some things he just couldn't fight.

He slowly trudged to the door, not bothering to change from his borrowed pajamas. He wished they had pockets he could stuff his hands into, if only to hide how they still shook. He could still hear Dream's voice, rattling around his skull, tearing his mind apart from within.

He reached the living room, and saw Karl Jacobs lounging on the couch. There was a device on his lap that he was tapping away at with practiced precision. He looked up at the sound of Tommy's heavy footsteps, giving a friendly wave.

"Hi son!"

Tommy made the executive decision not to dignify that with a response. He was far too tired to deal with this at the moment. Instead, he stared at Karl with a dead gaze.

"...Ok. Well, um... how did you sleep?"

"Bad."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Um... is there anything I can do to help?"

"Nah, 's just nightmares big man. Nothing to worry about, I have 'em pretty much every night."

Karl clasped his hands together, frowning gently. "That's more worrying, actually. Do- do you want to talk about it? I know this is our first time meeting, but I *am* your father."

"You're- okay. Sure. I'm not talking about it though." Gaze darting around, searching for a change of subject, his attention landed on the device. He gestured towards it vaguely. "What are you up to?"

Karl looked down at the laptop, then back up at Tommy with a smile. "Oh! This! I'm writing an article about Sap. Or- well- about his hero secret identity, Panda."

Tommy blinked at him. “Isn’t- isn’t the whole fucking point of a secret identity to keep it, y’know, secret?”

“Well, *yeah*, but you’re our son! It’s fine if *you* know about it, as long as you don’t go around telling everyone.” Karl replied, as though it were obvious.

It was weird, the amount of trust these people were showing him. The secret identity thing seemed like a pretty fucking big deal! Yet Karl just *told* him, as though it were nothing! He was a literal stranger. The lack of self preservation these alternate versions of people he knew displayed was astounding.

The smell of smoke reached his nose, putting him on high alert. It wasn’t a smell he was unfamiliar with, and it usually meant nothing good. He was trying to decide whether or not to pull a weapon, when a shout came from the kitchen.

“KARL! I SET THE STOVE ON FIRE AGAIN!”

“DAMMIT, SAPNAP!” Under his breath, Karl added “I am going to edit this article to make him look bad.”

Chapter End Notes

It appears I may have accidentally dropped a *bit* of angst in this one! Oops?

Big man's first pancake

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As it turned out, the food Sapnap had been attempting to cook was charred beyond recognition. Knowing what he did about the version of Sapnap from home, Tommy was unsurprised. Arson boy burnt the food, gasp! What a fucking shock!

After the not-so-restful sleep he'd gotten, Tommy decided that this was not his problem. Could he have pulled the water bucket from his inventory and put out the flames? Yes. Was he going to? Nah. It's much simpler and more fun to point and laugh as Sapnap desperately tried to stifle the flames. Based on Karl's reaction, this was really nothing to worry about. It probably happened often.

Tommy tried to check the time, but their clock was really weird. It was black and white, with a bunch of little lines. It didn't have a day or night symbol *anywhere!* Thankfully, he'd spent enough time without the use of a clock that he could vaguely guess what time of day it was. Based on the position of the sun when he looked out the window, early morning. Even if he hasn't slept well, he'd certainly been passed out a long time.

Quackity woke up about twenty-ish minutes after Sapnap successfully put out the kitchen fire. The duck hybrid was barely awake. He trudged his way to the center of the living room, and rolled his eyes.

"Based on the smell, I'm guessing you let Sap in the kitchen again?"

Karl raised both his hands in a defensive manner. "He's trying for a redemption arc! Who am I to deny him that?"

Quackity sighed loudly. "I guess I'm cooking?"

Karl's eyes lit up. "Can you make--"

"Yes, I'll make chocolate chip pancakes." Quackity replied with mock exasperation, fondness clearly visible on his face.

"What the fuck is a pancake?" Tommy asked loudly.

Karl gave an affronted gasp. "Q, our son doesn't know what a *pancake* is! Oh my god, this is a tragedy! We have to help him, never have I seen something so horrible in all my years--"

"Karl, my love, leave the over-dramatic monologues to Wilbur. It doesn't suit you."

Tommy couldn't help but watch their comfortable domesticity in awe. It was so *weird*, seeing people happy and comfortable around each other like this. The easy way they interacted, with no hesitation or caution in their words. He couldn't remember the last time he'd witnessed

people interact with one another so seamlessly. Completely devoid of tension or resentment of any kind.

Quackity headed towards the kitchen, presumably to make “pancakes.” Tommy found it a bit odd that they were actually cooking, rather than just crafting food and calling it a day. Prime, it had been forever since he’d had an actual meal, rather than something crafted or just tossed in a furnace. While cooked food tasted undeniably better almost without exception, it took a lot of effort to make. Nobody has time to waste learning to prepare proper meals when war is always on the horizon.

Sapnap entered the living room, with slumped shoulders and a very exaggerated expression of defeat. Taking notice of his boyfriend’s dramatics, Karl giggled brightly.

“What did you do this time?”

Sapnap muttered something incomprehensible.

Karl raised an eyebrow. “Sap?”

“...I forgot the pan.”

The giggles increased in volume. “You- wait. You’re telling me you just. Put food. Directly on the burner?”

Sapnap’s face reddened with embarrassment. “I forgot, ok?”

The two continued to playfully tease each other, which Tommy tuned out. He stopped making a conscious effort to perceive the world around him, focusing instead on his thoughts. In the past, he probably would’ve done the exact opposite, but Puffy said it was important to process things. Apparently trying to ignore anything stressful or upsetting was bad for you. Who would’ve thought?

He hadn’t really paused to ponder the whole situation before now. He was in an alternate dimension, with alternate versions of people he knew. He had apparently been adopted. Tommy... didn’t quite know how to feel about that part. Having people care about him (or at least pretend to) was nice, but... the whole thing was still weird. Seriously, he had met this Quackity literally yesterday. A bit quick to add someone to your family.

The almost suspicious friendliness wasn’t the only thing about this universe that he thought was strange. The whole hero and villain thing still didn’t quite make sense. Like, Quackity had said that heroes arrest people who commit crimes. What, were *all* crimes punishable by prison? What even counted as a crime? He’d have to ask, as soon as Karl and Sapnap were out of earshot. Tommy would prefer not to accidentally commit crime and end up in prison, thank you very much. He’d experienced prison before and it was a solid 0/10 in his opinion. Very bad times.

Some amount of time later, Quackity announced that the “pancakes” were ready. Sapnap and Karl headed to the kitchen immediately, with Tommy awkwardly trailing behind. He couldn’t

deny he was curious to see what these “pancakes” that Karl was so clearly passionate about were. Also, the excitement of eating cooked food. Cooked food was fucking great.

Everyone else took a seat, and Tommy hesitantly did the same. Big Q brought some plates to the table, each having a circular bread-like object. They looked sort of like cookies, given that they were dotted with chunks of chocolate. They definitely smelled amazing. Checking his hunger bar, Tommy noticed it was only half full. Hopefully pancakes were filling. Cooked meals could vary wildly in the amount of nutrients and saturation they provided, as opposed to crafted foods which were always consistent.

Sitting on either side of his plate were a fork and knife. Tommy had no clue when he had last used actual silverware. Shoving an entire steak into your mouth was just quicker and more convenient, both important factors when you’re trying not to die. Prime, this really was an actual meal. Fucking wild.

The others were having some sort of animated conversation, but Tommy paid it no mind. His grasp on the silverware was clumsy and uncertain, but hopefully they wouldn’t notice. He didn’t want to look dumb. Cautiously, he took a bite of the pancake on his plate. His expression brightened immediately.

“Holy shit, this is so fucking good!”

Karl grinned. “See! I told you!”

Tommy took a second much larger bite of the food in front of him. It tasted even better than a gapple! The last thing he could remember eating that tasted this good was the cupcakes Niki used to make. He really missed Niki’s baking.

“What- what’s even in this fucking thing?”

“Uhh... flour, buttermilk, baking powder, salt, and eggs. Oh! And chocolate chips.” Quackity replied.

He nodded. Yes, Tommy definitely knew all of those things. For sure. “Baking powder.” That sounded so fucking fake. Oh yes, look at this meal I cooked! What did I use? Cooking liquid and ingredient paste. Yup. Totally!

Tommy didn’t voice these thoughts, of course. He wasn’t sure how far he could push without getting kicked out, so he decided not to test his luck. The safest option. While building himself a temporary place to stay wouldn’t be too hard, he actually liked it here. It was also a well-proven fact that Tommyinnit does not do the *best* with solitude.

The rest of the meal passed in a blur. Tommy had eaten enough to get his hunger bar to full, which he was grateful for. Quackity stood up from his place at the table. The duck hybrid took a couple steps towards the doorway before freezing, a look of realization coming over him.

“Tommy? You know how I’ve decided to illegally employ you at my casino?”

“...Yes big man?”

Quackity scratched the back of his head awkwardly. “I was planning on having you start today, but I forgot that you’ll need a suit.”

“Hmm. L.” Tommy replied eloquently.

Karl laughed. “Our son has a good point, Q.”

The duck hybrid rolled his eyes. “Do you guys think that he’s close enough in size to borrow a suit from Purpled?”

Sapnap raised an eyebrow skeptically. “I mean, do you think Purpled would willingly lend him a suit?”

“True. Dammit. What about Charlie?”

That certainly caught Tommy’s attention. An unfamiliar name! He wondered if it was someone who wasn’t even on the SMP. His curiosity was definitely piqued.

“They’re close enough in height that it’d probably work.” Sapnap replied with a nod. “Also, since it is literally my job to prevent crime, I was not here for this conversation.”

Quackity nodded. “Ok Tommy, I’m gonna call Charlie and ask him to bring an extra suit for you. You can change when we get there. You ready for your first day?”

Big man Tommy was gonna be working at a casino! This was so pogchamp. There would be gambling, a very fun activity. Unless you lose, and now Las Nevadas owns Linda. He missed Linda. She was a beautiful shovel. Oh, Quackity looked like he was waiting for a reply. Tommy should do that.

“Fuck yeah!”

Chapter End Notes

Hope y’all enjoyed the silly times after the angst I gave you last chapter! Also,,, the boys are heading to the Casino! Surely no conflict of any kind will arise there...

In which more important communication happens in Quackity's car.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As Tommy buckled himself into Quackity's car, he realized this was an excellent opportunity to ask about crimes. Obviously he couldn't do that where people would overhear. He didn't want the whole "I'm not even from this universe" thing to get out. People could use his lack of knowledge about this world to manipulate him.

"Hey big Q?"

Quackity glanced back at him. "Yeah?"

"What's illegal?"

The duck hybrid blinked. "The fuck does that mean?"

"Well, I don't want to accidentally commit a crime because I don't know the laws here!" Tommy huffed, crossing his arms.

"Uhhh I mean, normal stuff? What- what are the laws in your world?"

"Well, Sapnap tried to arrest us for selling drugs, but..." Tommy paused, trying to remember any actual laws.

"There aren't really any? I mean one guy went to prison for stealing all the shit people cared about so he could control them, and I know that using a fake military ID at restaurants is a pretty big deal but... that's it."

"I- what about theft? Or murder?"

The teen let out a startled laugh. "Fucking- *theft* is illegal? Oh what the fuck. You're telling me someone could go to jail just for stealing shit?"

"Yes!? What happens in your world when you get robbed?" Quackity sounded concerned, for some reason.

"You either get revenge or just deal with it. 'S not a big deal." Under his breath, Tommy added. "*Unless you accidentally start a fire...*"

Apparently having heard the muttered sentence, Quackity asked "So arson is at least illegal there, right?"

"Only when I do it." He replied bitterly. "Wasn't even fuckin' on purpose."

“Well- that’s- we can unpack that later. I think you should know laws. I don’t want to have to plan a prison break for you.” The duck hybrid joked, clearly trying to brighten the mood.

Tommy visibly flinched at the words “prison break.” Flashes of sirens and fear and being chased filled his mind. The memories swirled together in an unintelligent mess that seemingly existed just to give him a Bad Time.

Time to repress some trauma! Is it healthy? No. Is he gonna do it? Of course! Better than having a breakdown while stuck in a car with an alternate universe version of Quackity who he met literally yesterday. Not exactly Tommy’s idea of a fun time.

Oh good, it seemed like Quackity had noticed the flinch. Perfect. Though his focus stayed on the road, his eyes were filled with worry. The awkward silence inside the car was incredibly stifling. Tommy internally scrambled for something to say, hoping to lessen the discomfort.

“Tell me the laws!”

Quackity frowned slightly, but didn’t question him. Good. “Uh... don’t kill or attack people, don’t destroy other people’s stuff, don’t steal?”

“Like- what counts as killing somebody? Is it- if you take one of their lives but they aren’t fully dead does that still count?”

“Please explain to me what the fuck you mean by that.” He asked, sounding incredibly confused.

“So- for example. In my world, this person led me and my friends into a trap and all of us died once, but we all still had two more lives.”

“You have multiple lives?”

“You *DON’T!*?”

“NO? WHEN YOU DIE, YOU’RE DEAD! IT COULD NOT BE LESS COMPLICATED!”

Tommy’s tone was full of understanding. “So everyone in this world is like Philza Minecraft. Okay.”

“*What?*?”

“Oh, anyways. I don’t have extra lives *anymore*, so I’ll fit in!”

Quackity’s brow furrowed in concern. “That’s- you said two more... so you died twice?”

Dream stabbing him in the final control room. Pain amplified by the sword’s enchantments as he watched his friends, his family fall around him. Eret uttering those words carelessly, as though their demise meant nothing. The sting of betrayal had been far worse than the pain of his death and subsequent respawn.

Dream shooting him on the bridge. Tumbling into the icy waters of the pond, an arrow ending him quickly. His death overshadowed by the realization that he'd lost. He'd failed L'manberg. He'd failed *Wilbur*. Being forced to sacrifice his discs to secure independence. His discs, a symbol that he didn't always lose. Oh, the irony.

Dream beating him to death in the prison. Of course, Dream had taken his first two lives, why not the third? Mounting terror as the hits didn't stop, pleading for help that never came. The ever-growing horror as he realized that Dream wouldn't stop. This was it. Everything was over for him. (It wasn't, actually. He'd been harshly dragged back to the land of living, haunted by months in Limbo.)

"Yes. Twice. Uh huh. Only two. Twice." Tommy replied unconvincingly.

"Okay. I think we should talk about this, but it doesn't have to be right now."

"Oh yes I will definitely talk about it." Tommy lied.

Quick, time for a convenient change of subject! "So what was that thing you used early? To talk to Wilbur?"

"...My fucking phone?"

Tommy shrugged. "Yeah probably. What's it do?"

"It's for talking to people. Calling or messaging them. You don't fucking have phones in your world?"

"Ohhh. So it's like a communicator. Pogchamp."

"Y'know what? Sure. I am done asking questions for right now. Also, we're here."

Sure enough, it appeared the car had stopped. Tommy still thought it was wild, the concept of cars actually moving. The camarvan had just been built, and stayed there! Yet somehow, probably through redstone fuckery of some sort or another, these things were fully mobile. Fast, too! Even quicker than minecarts on powered rails.

Exiting the vehicle, he took in the building in front of him. The aesthetic was very similar to the buildings in Las Nevadas, which really shouldn't have been a surprise. It was made of some white material that didn't quite look like quartz, with shiny golden embellishments. The sign had a stylized image of a goose, with cursive letters marking this as "The Golden Goose."

Quackity pulled out his phone. It looked like he was messaging someone. A few moments later, a somewhat familiar figure exited the large building.

"Hey boss! I got the spare suit you asked for- Who's the kid?" The person (presumably Charlie) asked.

The duck hybrid placed a hand on Tommy's shoulder. "This is my son, Tommy. He works here now. Tommy, this is Charlie."

Wonderful. Charlie was that fucking slime guy. Figured, that this world's version of him would work for Quackity too. Prime. That guy gave Tommy bad vibes. This version of the slime man looked a whole lot more human. His hair was clearly made of bright green sludge, but otherwise he was just Some Guy.

Remembering something, Tommy stared Charlie dead in the eye and asked "How many bones do you have?"

Chapter End Notes

I am Very Excited for next chapter. Hint: a certain character is going to appear. Place your bets now, folks!

YOU! (Derogatory)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"How many bones do you have?"

Charlie laughed. "What- What a wonderful- What a *wonderful* first question to ask a stranger!"

Noticeably, he did not *answer* the question. Sus. Amogus sus, even. Tommy narrowed his eyes.

The slime hybrid handed Tommy a suit, which he inspected. Thankfully, there was not a trace of goop on it. Upon closer investigation, he noticed a horrible flaw with the outfit. While the undershirt was white and the coat and pants were a nice forest green, the tie was absolutely horrible. Literally the worst color. *Lime green*. Tommy's nose wrinkled in distaste. (And if the sight of the vivid color sparked a brief moment of panic, no it didn't.)

He turned to Quackity. "Do I *have* to wear the tie?"

The duck hybrid opened his mouth to reply, freezing at the sight of Tommy's impressive puppy eyes. "I- I guess not..."

"You are now my favorite father." The teen declared seriously.

Quackity beamed. "I am calling Karl and Sapnap to tell them I won!"

"Good job, boss!" Charlie smiled, giving a thumbs up.

The duck hybrid clapped his hands together. "Alright! Tommy, I'm gonna have you serving drinks. Purpled used to do that, but we moved him to security with Foolish. I'll show you to the bathroom to get changed, and then I can introduce you to your coworkers."

More people he knew from home! Did that mean *everyone* from his world had a counterpart here? On one hand, that meant there was probably another Tubbo. On the other... well, there were definitely a few people he'd prefer not to deal with any version of.

Tommy nodded distractedly, following Quackity into the building. It was decorated in a very gaudy manner, and brightly lit. Being early morning, most of the patrons were older folks who were visibly wealthy. He saw several tables with different card games, as well as a full wall of different slot machines. There was a bar off to the side, but he didn't spot anybody behind it. He continued trailing behind as the duck hybrid let him into a room labeled "Employees Only." He was pointed to a simple black door in the far corner of the room and instructed to change.

He put on the suit (minus the horrible tie) as quickly as possible, doing his best not to think about it. Suits didn't exactly bring up the best memories. In fact, he preferred to forgo formal

wear whenever possible, something he felt nobody could really blame him for. The outfit was a bit too short, and a bit too loose in the sides. Most of his clothes he'd made for himself by hand, so wearing something ill-fitting was an odd feeling. He'd probably want to sew himself a proper suit soon if he was going to work here for a while.

Being so near to multiple people made him itch to put his armor on. He wouldn't, because nobody else was wearing any and he didn't want to stand out. The lack of protection still felt uncomfortable. Even when there were no enemies in sight, an attack could come at any moment. He'd been taught that lesson far too many times.

Tommy exited the room, resolutely ignoring the discomfort brought by his current attire. If he didn't acknowledge the issue it simply did not exist. His own hang-ups about the suit were all but forgotten when he saw the way pride overtook Quackity's features. Nobody had looked at him like that since... Well, since Wilbur. In the early days of L'manberg. It was nice, he realized.

For all he had once tried to be important, tried to be the biggest man, Tommyinnit wasn't a leader. He always felt most secure when someone else took charge for him. Being in charge of himself, of his own life, had been difficult. It was so much easier when he had someone to follow. Like he had followed Wilbur. Like Tubbo, briefly, in the early days of New L'manberg. Like Dream, during exile. Like Techno, after escaping Logsted. Tommy could feel himself doing the same thing here, now, with this alternate version of Quackity. He wasn't sure how he felt about it.

Quackity reached forward to ruffle his hair, and Tommy let him. "You fit right in, kid!"

"Not a kid." He muttered half-heartedly in response.

True to his word, Quackity made a quick round of introductions. There was Foolish, chief of security. In this world the demigod was fully mortal. He was a shark hybrid, with emerald green eyes and patches of golden scales. He also had sharp teeth and a shiny gold shark tail that Tommy personally thought made him look badass.

Purpled had bright violet eyes and antennae, with a finely tailor suit to match. Apparently him and Tommy would be stationed right next to each other, so they'd probably end up talking. Maybe. Honestly, Tommy didn't know much about his world's version of Purpled. The guy was a mercenary, about his age, and his UFO had gotten blown up somehow. That was pretty much the extent of his knowledge.

"Oh, you'll also need to know our bartender. Since you'll be giving him people's drink orders, and picking up drinks from him, the two of you will end up interacting a lot." Quackity said, leading Tommy back to the side room with the bar he'd seen when they first walked in.

There was someone behind the counter now, someone incredibly familiar. Tommy froze at the sight, stopping dead in his tracks.

A slightly rumpled black suit with a vibrant red tie. Dark brown hair, stubble from a slight beard. Floppy sheep ears and a curled pair of dark ram's horns. Standing behind the bar,

mixing a cocktail, was none other than that absolute bastard *JSchlatt*.

Tommy glared venomously. “*You.*”

The ram hybrid had the absolute audacity to appear confused. “Have we met?”

“You fucking *bitch!*” Tommy stepped forward.

“...Tommy?” Quackity asked hesitantly.

“Quackity- *Dad*, can I punch him? *Please?*”

The casino owner tilted his head in contemplation. “Well...”

“What- c’mon, Quackity, you can’t *seriously* be considering this!” Schlatt loudly protested.

“I mean, it *would* be pretty funny...” He glanced at Tommy’s hopeful expression. “Sure. Just once though.”

“Thank you so much, Big Q!”

“This is a hostile work environment.” The ram hybrid complained.

Tommy stepped forward, fully intent on decking the bastard right in his nose. He had learned to throw punches from Technoblade himself. He gave a perfectly aimed right cross, only for his fist to move *through* Schlatt’s face without making an impact.

“WHAT THE FUCK!?”

The ram gave an obnoxious high pitched laugh. “You didn’t- what, you thought I wouldn’t use my power? I may be a disgraced hero, but I’m no easy target, kid.”

Tommy moved the netherite sword from his hotbar into his hand, and Schlatt stopped laughing abruptly.

Chapter End Notes

Looks at y’all’s predictions for who the new character would be Nobody expects the Schlatt!

First day of work

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Quackity pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed. “Tommy, please don’t stab him. Blood stains would be a nightmare to get out of this carpet.”

“Wonderful to know my boss is so concerned for my welfare.” Schlatt quipped.

Tommy pouted. “Awwwww but Big Q... he deserves it.”

“Literally what did I ever do to you!”

Ignoring Schlatt, the duck hybrid raised an eyebrow. “Tommy, why don’t we talk in the other room?”

He started heading towards the employees’ lounge, clearly expecting Tommy to follow. Tommy made sure to send the ram one last glare before dashing after Quackity. He tried to shove down the anxiety. Even if he was mad, Tommy was more than capable of defending himself. It would be fine.

The door clicked shut behind them, and Tommy made the executive decision to keep his sword in his hand. Just in case. He didn’t think Quackity would try to hurt him, but you never know.

“Alright. I’m assuming your problem with Schlatt is another alternate universe thing?”

Oh. *Oh*, it was just that. Tommy relaxed slightly, putting away his weapon. “Yeah. Fucking asshole hurt my best friend, and he exiled me and Wilbur and ordered Tubbo’s public execution and it’s *his* fault that Wil lost it and blew everything up! Wilbur wouldn’t have died if it wasn’t for him!”

Quackity blinked, visibly processing this new information. “Wow- that’s... Every new thing I learn about you is more and more worrying.”

“Part of my charm, innit?”

“Sure. I- wait! Is that the public execution you mentioned earlier?”

“Huh?” He had a moment of confusion before remembering their first discussion in the car.

“Oh, no. I was talking about a different one. Tubbo’s wasn’t L’manberg, it was Manberg.”

“...Yeah. Okay. All the things you said were fucked up, but like... this Schlatt didn’t do that? I mean he’s annoying as hell, but the worst thing he’s done was publicly make a fool of himself and lose his hero license. He doesn’t deserve to be stabbed. Also mostly I don’t want my carpets getting bloodstained.”

Tommy was begrudgingly forced to admit that he had a point. Maybe alternate Schlatt wasn't an absolute wrong'un. He *was* an entire separate person. Tommy still didn't like it, though. At very least he could understand Quackity's stance on bloodstains. Those were an absolute bitch to deal with. He had plenty of personal experience.

Mentally running Quackity's words over in his head, something stood out to him. This story he *had* to hear. Tommy quirked an eyebrow curiously.

"What do you mean, he 'made a fool of himself?'"

Quackity grinned. "Oh, it's hilarious. He used to be this big bad hero, right? His name was Specter because he can phase through things like a ghost."

Tommy nodded to show that he was listening.

"Then one day, the idiot was drunk on the job. He badly sang 'happy birthday' to a villain, took off his own mask, and tripped into a fucking dumpster! The whole thing was being filmed and it went viral!" Quackity struggled to talk between laughs.

"Fucking- Prime, that's amazing!" Tommy cackled.

"Yeah! Of course he lost his license, who the fuck would trust the guy to protect them after *that*?"

"L."

"*Massive L.*" Quackity agreed cheerfully.

Tommy sighed. "I guess I won't stab him. Inside, at least."

Quackity gave him an affectionate clap on the shoulder. "Thanks kid!"

"I am not a *fucking* k--"

"Why don't I show you where you're stationed so you can get to work?"

He grumbled a few insults under his breath, but followed after Quackity regardless. He was led over to a small workstation in the far right corner of the main room. It was a good spot, he was able to keep an eye on everybody from there. Purpled stood right next to it, watching the gamblers with visible boredom.

Tommy gave him an acknowledging nod, which was quickly returned. Quackity shoved a couple objects into Tommy's hands, which he accepted clumsily. Glancing down, it was a notepad and a nice black and gold pen.

"Your job is to stand here and keep an eye on the customers. They'll wave you over when they want to order a drink. You can use these to write down their orders and bring them to Schlatt. Do *not* stab him." Quackity instructed with a firm look.

“Yeah, sure, whatever. No stabbing. Most boring rule I’ve ever heard.” Tommy waved a hand dismissively.

The duck hybrid smiled fondly. “I’m going to step out for a bit, but I’ll definitely be here in time to take you home. If you need anything, ask Charlie.”

Tommy nodded, and Quackity walked off leaving him alone with Purpled. There was an awkward silence, neither teen knowing how to address each other. Tommy wasn’t even able to cheat using knowledge from the DSMP, because he didn’t really have any. Truly a modern tragedy.

“So. Uh- did you try to stab Schlatt?”

“Yup. Would’ve done it, too, if big Q hadn’t stopped me.”

Purpled chuckled. “Nice. That guy’s a dick.”

“Exactly! A fucking wrong’un, he is!” Tommy grinned, waving his hands for emphasis.

“Do you try to stab people often?”

He shrugged. “Only when they deserve it.”

“Same.”

“Pog.”

The conversation met a lull, but the silence this time was far more comfortable. Tommy had never really spent time with him in his own world, but based off first impressions Purpled seemed alright.

The time passed fairly quickly. After the first couple orders, Tommy fell into an easy rhythm. Chat with Purpled, take an order, lightly threaten Schlatt, bring the customer their drink, repeat. He reckoned a couple of hours had passed when Purpled asked him a confusing question.

“Do you wanna see my power?”

Tommy blinked, trying not to look confused. He’d also heard Schlatt mention something about a power after he cheated his way out of that punch. Quackity had said that the ram hybrid had the power to phase through things. Did everyone here have some sort of superpower? Unfair. Tommy would like a power.

“Sure, big man!” He replied hastily, realizing he’d been quiet a bit too long.

Purpled held a hand out towards someone at a table nearby, and a beam of swirling green and purple light sprang into existence. Tommy opened his mouth to ask a question, shutting it again when he noticed an item levitating. The object floated out of the person’s pocket, slowly moving higher in the air within the beam. Completely silent, Purpled stepped forward

and snatched it from midair. The light disappeared, and Purplef held up the item with a victorious grin.

“I got his wallet!” The security guard announced proudly.

Tommy didn’t know what a wallet was, but he wasn’t about to ask. “Pogchamp! That’s such a cool power!”

The person who he’d just robbed looked in their direction, and Purpled quickly shoved the “wallet” into Tommy’s hands.

“Hide this!” He hissed quietly.

Tommy put the wallet in his inventory, earning a questioning glance from Purpled. Whatever confusion the guy had was not voiced, as he simply returned to watching the casino’s patrons.

The work would probably have gotten boring pretty quickly, were it not for Purpled. As the two slowly grew more used to one another, they started making fun of customers. Several more people were relieved of their wallets, all of which found a new home within Tommy’s inventory. Towards the end of the day he’d maybe even be willing to consider Purpled something like a friend.

Quackity returned eventually, informing them that their shift had come to an end. Purpled had had Tommy retrieve the wallets, emptying them of their contents. The loot was split equally, with Tommy receiving several small slips of colored paper that had numbers on them. He was at least eighty percent sure the paper was supposed to be this world’s currency.

When he’d informed his new parent that they’d spent the day committing theft, Quackity looked incredibly proud. “That’s my boy! Just don’t get caught, alright?”

“Imagine getting caught. Could not be me.”

“That’s what I love to hear! Let’s head home.”

Home. Tommy wasn’t sure he’d fully considered somewhere to be his home in a long time. Not since L’manberg. Sure, he had his little dirt shack. That thing could barely be considered a house, much less a home. Home was something he’d longed for since it had been harshly torn away from him. Home was warmth and safety and friends.

Maybe, He thought to himself. *Maybe this could be a home.*

Chapter End Notes

Lowkey neglecting my other fics in favor of updating this one,,, In my defense I have so many plans for this AU and I will Die if I do not get to write them all ❤️

Tommyinnit had acquired Phone!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

For the first time, Quackity and Tommy managed to make it a whole car ride without having an important conversation that pushed the plot forward. The long drive from the Golden Goose back to their house was filled with meaningless chatter. Tommy could feel himself growing comfortable with this version of Quackity, and he wasn't sure if that was a good thing. He was starting to let his guard down, which could put him in danger. Tommy had always been a bit too quick to trust.

They arrive home without much fanfare. Tommy sprinted into the house, eager to change out of the suit. It was uncomfortable. He dashed inside and headed straight to his room, pulling his regular clothes from his inventory. Changing quickly, he headed back into the living room. Quackity was smiling at him and holding a box. Weird.

"I got something for you!" The duck hybrid declared cheerfully.

Ah, that explains the box. "Yeah?"

"Since you obviously didn't have a phone, I got you one. Now you'll be able to contact us whenever. Do you want me to show you how it works?"

"Sure! Uh-" Tommy glanced around. "Where are Karl and Sapnap?"

"I sent them to go get groceries. Don't want them being suspicious over why a teenager doesn't know how to use a phone." Quackity gave him a reassuring smile.

"You're a good man, big Q."

"Thanks, Tommy!"

The two sat as Quackity patiently explained how to set up a password, and how to call and text people. At very least those last two functions weren't too different from a comm, making it easier for Tommy to pick up. He also attempted to explain social media, but Tommy still didn't really get it. He was sure he could figure it out eventually, though.

There was still one thing he *hadn't* explained, though. "So where's the general chat option?"

"The... what?"

"Y'know, general chat. Where you can send messages to everyone else in the world and also see when they die."

"What the fuck. That sounds horrible, why would that be a thing?" Quackity exclaimed.

The teen crossed his arms. “Well, if somebody dies then how do you tell what killed them then!”

“Autopsies?”

“The hell is an ‘awe-top-see?’”

“It’s when they examine a dead body to see how they died. Like they cut them open and test their blood and stuff.” Quackity explained.

Tommy wrinkled his nose. “Gross. The only dead body we ever cut open was Schlatt’s, at his funeral, and that was just so people could steal his bones and organs. You know how it is.”

Softly, but with a lot of emotion, Quackity said “What the *fuck*.”

Ignoring the brand new crisis he had kindly gifted his recently acquired father, Tommy opened the texting app. Quackity had kindly loaded a couple numbers in there for him, but he was definitely gonna have to change the contact names. Seriously, what the fuck were these?

Best Dad

Gossip Dad

Hero Dad

Purpled

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊

Tommy quickly changed the first three to “big q” “jarl kjabos” and “spanpap” electing to leave the names for Fundy and Purpled unchanged. There was nothing wrong with them, in his opinion.

Experimentally, he sent Fundy a text.

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊

Tommy: youre a fuckin g furry

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Hello?

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Who is this?

Tommy: wouldnt yuo like to know furry boy

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: ...Im blocking you

Tommy: wiait no

Tommy: its tommy

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Im not a fucking furry

Tommy: denial si the frist stage

Having a phone was great, Tommy decided. He especially enjoyed how unlike with comms, you could change people's names. Sadly it would only show up like that for yourself, according to Quackity. Tommy still wished that were a feature on communicators too. It was fun.

Purpled

Tommy: yo purple

Purpled: how did you get this number.

Purpled: I have no morals I will use violence

Tommy: its tommy and big q gave it to me

Purpled: tell him his days are numbered

Purpled: also hi tommy!

Tommy: i will lte him onow.

Purpled: how are you this bad at spelling. those are one syllable words.

Tommy: die

He laughed, smiling down at his phone. Talking to people was nice. He wished he could message Tubbo right now. Oh, shit. Tubbo. He was probably worried, wasn't he? Hopefully Drista had let him know what she did. Tommy didn't want him to be stressed.

...What was he doing again? Oh, right. He had an important message to relay.

"Big Q. Purpled says your days are numbered."

The duck hybrid chuckled, unconcerned. "Yeah, that sounds like him."

Tommy wondered what it was like, being able to laugh off threats of violence. Certainly people like Technoblade and Phil could do that. They were incredibly powerful and more than capable of taking care of themselves. Was this world's Quackity the same, or was it something about this world? Despite the fact that death was apparently *permanent* in this world, was it less common? Did they not have to live in a state of constant vigilance, always awaiting the next attack? Tommy couldn't really imagine a life like that.

Quackity's voice pulled him from his thoughts. "Anyways, hopefully it'll be good for you to have a phone. This way if you go out by yourself you can still contact us."

Going out on his own. Tommy hadn't really stopped to think about it before, but that sounded good. He'd enjoy a chance to explore and get a sense of his surroundings. Maybe he could map out possible escape routes and hiding places in his head, just a little bit. As a treat.

"Poggers. I think I will go for a walk now, in fact!" He declared, already heading towards the door.

“O- Oh, okay! Uh... try to be back by ten for dinner!”

Tommy gave him a thumbs up. “You got it, big man!”

He headed out, excited to have a bit of a look around. It was already starting to get dark outside and a bit chilly. He wished he had kept the suit jacket with him, if only for an extra layer to combat the cold. He was no Technoblade, but he did his best to commit his surroundings to memory. It could be useful, someday. Never hurts to be prepared.

...Apparently it *could* hurt to be prepared. With all his focus on memorizing the buildings around him, he'd failed to notice the darkening sky. He had *also* failed to notice the shady person at the entrance of an alleyway until they had grabbed him. He was currently being held at knifepoint, which was not very pogchamp.

Well. This wasn't ideal.

Chapter End Notes

New character next chapter and oh Boy it's gonna be HILARIOUS I cannot wait.

ALSO! I made a tumblr sideblog to talk about my fics/post the occasional art I make for the stuff I write. If you wanna talk to me abt any of my fics, or just in general, here's the link! <https://thesmallestactofgood.tumblr.com/>

[A wild superhero has appeared!]

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

This was far from the first time he'd had his life threatened. Plus, this person was unarmored and had nothing but a puny knife. Pathetic, honestly.

"Give me all your money, kid." The person growled.

"I'm not a fucking kid, dickhead." He retorted.

"I literally do not care. Just give me your cash."

Seriously. He'd seen far better attempts at robbery. He had *done* better robberies, even. This was not something he particularly felt like dealing with at the moment. Given that he had a significant amount of practical combat experience, he wasn't going to just take this. Tommy was about to bring his sword to his hand to kick the robber's ass when they were interrupted by a gruff voice.

"I'd recommend lettin' the kid go, actually."

Tommy blinked in disbelief. Standing at the entrance to the alley was somebody incredibly familiar. While this man was much more human than the seven foot piglin from his own universe, the outfit was unmistakable. A jeweled golden crown and a blood red cape. A single emerald dangling from one of his fluffy pointed boar-like ears. Standing before him, brandishing a sword, was fucking Technoblade. What the *fuck*.

Molten gold sprung into existence around the would-be mugger, wrapping them in shining chains. Tommy was far less concerned with the person who had just been attempting to rob him than he was with the appearance of Technoblade.

There was definitely one aspect of this Techno's outfit that was different, which Tommy commented on immediately. "Why do you have a fucking boar skull on your face? Seems unsanitary."

"I- Shouldn't you be thankin' me? I just saved you and all." Techno asked, somewhat taken aback.

"Nah. Answer my question."

"Well, it looks cool. Plus, I needed somethin' to protect my identity. Y'know, bein' a hero and all."

Tommy couldn't help but let out a small snicker. "A- you're a hero?"

"...Yes? I'm literally the number one hero right now. You haven't heard of me?" The boar titled his head to the side.

“You- wait. Hero. Heroes work for the *government!* You work as a fucking government hero!” The teen stated with increasing laughter.

Techno was getting increasingly confused. “I- yeah? That is how it works?”

Tommy couldn’t help it. He fell to the ground in a fit of cackles. This was the funniest shit he’s seen in his entire life. Techno. Technoblade. A *hero*. A government employee, too! The absolute irony had Tommy losing it. Prime, he wished his Technoblade could see this.

When Techno had first gone out, he’d expected a normal patrol. Villain activity was slightly lower than usual, but not to a suspicious degree. After having soundly beaten Nuke during their last battle, the villain was likely hidden away somewhere licking his wounds. The villain Glitch had caused a bit of trouble in the inner ring of the city, but Speedster had been sent to handle it. Seeing as him and Techno passed the title of top hero back and forth like a hot potato, a victory against the minor villain was practically guaranteed.

He had been making his rounds, stationed in the center ring today. The way the city was structured, it was divided into three rings. The inner ring had the most hero patrols and villain attack, being the home of the wealthy and powerful. The middle ring contained the middle class residences, as well as the majority of the city’s businesses. Though it had the highest crime rates, the city’s outer ring had the fewest scheduled hero patrols. Being home mostly to the poor, it was deemed unimportant by most politicians. Techno abhorred the system, but at very least mayor Eret seemed to be doing their best to fix things.

Being sent to the middle ring was nice, as he spent most of his time stationed in the inner. Being one of the best heroes in the city did have some slight downfalls. Being able to deal with some petty criminals, as opposed to every villain who thinks they’re some sort of hotshot, was fairly relaxing. He had already broken up a couple fights when it happened.

It at first appeared to be a standard mugging. Someone dressed in all black, holding a knife to a kid and demanding his money. The crime itself was nothing unusual, really. He managed to quickly and easily incapacitate the criminal without a fight. No, what was strange was the kid being robbed.

The child seemed almost entirely unconcerned about the fact he had just been held at knifepoint. He started questioning Techno’s fashion choices, which was honestly just rude. Then he started to laugh at him. The entire situation was wholly confusing for the boar hybrid.

He reflected on the way the kid had questioned his status as a hero. Now, Technoblade was not a vain man by any means, but he was aware that he had a considerable amount of fame. Being that he was either first or second ranked hero at any given moment, his hero name was plastered all over social media. He had even been coerced into endorsing a couple commercial products. You would be hard pressed to find anyone who wasn’t at least vaguely aware of the famed hero Midas.

While he had been distracted trying to figure out why there was a child on the ground cackling, the criminal had apparently broken his golden chains. Oops. While his power was

useful, it certainly wasn't the strongest material he could've had the ability to create and control. Still, seeing as it was solid metal, he was going to blame this on the fact that the criminal was probably powered.

He prepared to step forward and fight, but the kid quite literally beat him to the punch. He watched in awe as this child summoned a glowing purple sword from nowhere, kicking the criminal to the ground and holding the weapon to their throat. The downed mugger attempted to free himself, only to be met with a sharp hit to the head with the sword's hilt.

"Yeah, take that, bitch!" The child shouted victoriously.

Looking the child over, Techno was starting to put some pieces together and he wasn't sure he liked what he saw. The vast collection of scars. The well-trained fighting ability. The seeming cluelessness about his hero status. That kid had escaped from an underground fighting ring, hadn't he?

Oh, that would explain why he was out so late. The kid likely has nowhere to go. Pushing his poor social skills to the limit, Techno attempted to approach the topic with subtlety.

"So... kid. You got parents?"

He internally winced. Words were *not* his strong suit. Why couldn't it have been Phil that found the child. Phil was great with kids!

"First of all, fuck you I am not a kid. Second of all, very sus question to ask a minor." The human crossed his arms with a share glare.

"Just... do you have somewhere safe to go?"

He shrugged. "Pretty much. A guy found me on the street and decided he was my father now, so I live in his home."

Techno frowned. "That sounds like kidnapping."

"He gave me pancakes, so it's fine."

"Your lack of self-preservation is highly concernin'."

"I've been told that most things about me are concerning. It's part of what makes me Tommyinnit!" The kid- Tommyinnit, apparently- pulled out a phone and began texting.

"...If you're sure you're alright."

The kid waved dismissively. "Yeah, now fuck off."

Techno really wanted to push further, but the criminal seemed to be stirring. He should probably get them to the cops. Sighing, he chained the robber back up and started carrying the ungracefully towards a police station. He hoped the weird kid would be alright.

Chapter End Notes

We've got mentions of a couple villains, I wanna see y'all's guesses for who Nuke and Glitch are!

Also. Finished this chapter at 5:37 AM so I could give y'all your content. Enjoy!

Almost got stabbed! Anyways-

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Meeting the alternate version of Technoblade had certainly been an *experience*. Tommy still couldn't believe he worked for the *government* as a *hero*! That has to be the best thing Tommy had ever seen. The comedy of the entire situation drowned out any possible fear he could have felt.

Looking at the small numbers at the top of his new phone's screen, he realized it was 11:13 pm. Now, Tommy was no mathematician, but he was pretty sure that was later than 10 o'clock, when Quackity told him to be home by. Whoops. Hopefully he wouldn't be too mad. At very least, Tommy could use the whole "almost got robbed" thing as an excuse.

He would simply get back to the house as quickly as possible and then tell them his excuse. Yes. A foolproof plan. Glancing around, he came to an incredibly unpleasant realization. He did not know the way home from here. Fuck.

big q

Tommy: so fnunny story

Tommy: do u want teh good nrws or the bad news

big q: Holy shit where are you

Tommy: asbwer my quesiton

big q: Good news I guess??

Tommy: i knocked hmi out bfore he cuold stab me

big q: WHAT

big q: WHO?!???

Tommy: bsad news is someone helfd knife to my neck not poggers

Tommy: anda lso i am lost

Tommy: oh and i mte techonpblad he is a hreo

Tommy: i lguaghed at him

big q: Oh my fucking god share your location I'm coming to pick you up

big q: Wait Techno told his secret identity to you??

Tommy: no <3

big q: ...Ok. Just stay where you are I'm coming to get you.

Tommy: thst sounds liuke a threat big man

Tommy shut his phone, glancing around. He really wished he had a coat or something. Being cold and bored was *not* his idea of a good time. He sat down on the rough concrete, thinking about the person who had tried to rob him.

Their fighting form was terrible and their weapon was downright laughable. Either that person was, like, very pathetic, or this server didn't have much conflict. Everyone on the Dream SMP at very least knew how to hold a sword and shoot a bow. If you didn't, you'd be as good as dead.

He caught a glimpse of someone wearing bright cyan jumping from rooftop to rooftop. This place was really fucking weird. While he could appreciate that only one person here had even semi-tried to kill him, he wished things made more sense. It was a lot of work pretending to understand normal things like cars and wallets while he was in front of anyone other than Quackity.

That was another thing. Quackity. Try as he might, Tommy just couldn't figure him out. Why was Quackity helping him? Why was he being so *nice*? In Tommy's experience, people weren't nice to him unless they wanted something. That was just the way it worked. Except for Tubbo and Ranboo, he supposed. The two of them didn't count. They were just special or something.

The sound of footsteps put him on instant alert. Sword still in hand, he whipped around to locate the source. Upon seeing Quackity, he relaxed minutely and returned the weapon to his inventory. The duck hybrid was staring at him with blatant worry, which he really couldn't understand. He specifically said that he hadn't been stabbed even a little! Plus, even if he *had* been, his hunger was full. He would've healed near instantly.

"Tommy! Oh my god, are you ok?"

"Don't be such a mother hen, Quackity. Or- mother duck? ...Perhaps even... Motherfuck?"

Quackity stared at him for a long moment. "...Yeah, I think you're fine."

Tommy grinned easily. "Really, don't worry king. People have done much worse to me!"

"That makes me more worried about you, but ok!" He tried and failed to hide his obvious concern behind a smile.

"Let's head home!"

"Your dinner is definitely cold by now, but we can heat it back up."

Tommy tilted his head in confusion. "I don't need to eat? I haven't been running and I didn't get injured."

"What the fuck does that have to do with being hungry?"

"I didn't use up my hunger. So it's still full." He explained, speaking slowly.

“I don’t- you are the most confusing person I’ve ever met.”

“I’m just pogchamp like that!”

Quackity nodded with a fond smile. “Very true, Tommy.”

The rest of their walk was full of meaningless chit-chat. Big Q went on about the profits at his casino, how business had been better than usual. He also talked about Sapnap, who apparently ate bamboo when he was stressed. Tommy let himself relax, content to listen more than talk. He was tired and glad for the companionship that Quackity provided.

They got back to the house, with Quackity asking him to be quiet. Apparently Sapnap and Karl were already asleep. Tommy kind of wanted to go to bed, but he knew it would be hours before he could achieve unconsciousness. Hopefully if he stayed up late and made himself exhausted enough, he wouldn’t have another nightmare. An unrealistic hope, but it would be nice.

Quackity put away the leftovers from what was supposed to be Tommy’s dinner (-cooked food again, how much time did these people *have*-) and bid Tommy goodnight. Now he was alone, and bored again. Despite the fact he knew it was an absolutely terrible idea, some part of him was tempted to go wandering outside again. It was marginally better than sitting here with nothing to do.

Ultimately he decided to stay put, if only so Quackity wouldn’t get all worried if he got up and found Tommy gone. This version of him looked so much less stressed and the teen wasn’t inclined to change that. Really, everyone he’s met here seemed much more carefree. He wondered what it was like to live like that.

Hm, no. He would *not* sit here reflecting on his life to pass the time. That sounded like sad little man behavior, and Tommy was not little. He was the biggest man. What else could he do to entertain himself? Hm...

He retrieved his phone again, quickly pulling up the list of contacts.

big q

Purpled

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊

jarl kjabos

spanpap

Tapping on Quackity’s contact, he changed the name to “motherfuck” Satisfied with this change, he decided to send Purpled a text. He seemed like the kind of guy to still be awake at 11:47 pm.

Purpled

Tommy: im bored

Purpled: lol ok.

Purpled: suffer then.

Tommy: yuo are sso very mnean and cruel to me

Purpled: true.

Tommy: do uyo have any wives

Purpled: lose my number

Tommy: ok geuss i wont help you steal wallets anytmore

Purpled: wait no

Purpled: tommy, my best friend,

Purpled: we can talk about this

Tommy: ill forgige you if you use uore power to make shclat fall on the geund

Purpled: deal!

Tommy clicked off the phone with a smile. It felt nice, having a friend. He thought he could put Purpled into that category. Quackity too. Maybe even Karl and Sapnap. For however long he would be in this world, it was nice to know he wouldn't be alone.

Chapter End Notes

Gotta say it's really fun seeing all your guys' predictions for Glitch and Nuke! I'm very excited for both of those reveals. One of them in particular is Hilarious to me, for reasons I cannot yet reveal.

Also! Goldenduo enjoyers come get your juice

Tommy Translation Time!

Tommy: so funny story

Tommy: do u want the good news or the bad news

Tommy: answer my question

Tommy: i knocked him out before he could stab me

Tommy: bad news is someone held knife to my neck not poggers

Tommy: and als i am lost

Tommy: oh and i met technoblade he is a hero

Tommy: i laughed at him

Tommy: you are so very mean and cruel to me

Tommy: do you have any wives

Tommy: ok guess i wont help you steal wallets anymore

Tommy: ill forgive you if you use your power to make schlatt fall on the ground

WHAT THE (literal) HELL!?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Tommy finally passed out, he was lucky to enjoy a couple hours of dreamless sleep. This also meant his sleep was Dream-less, which was the goal. Mission accomplished! He'd give himself a pat on the back, but he was incredibly tired. Apparently getting only three hours of sleep doesn't give you much energy. Who knew?

Alright, well. Tommy rationally knew this was going to happen. He had fully brought it upon himself. The heaviness and fog of sleep deprivation were all too familiar. The way his vision blurred slightly, struggling to keep focus on the world around him. How it felt as though his thoughts were floating, drifting out of reach the second his grip on them faltered. All in all, something less than ideal.

He changed from his borrowed pajama back into normal attire. The iconic red and white t-shirt and tan khakis he always wore. He had several exact copies of the outfit back in his home, all made by hand. He was dedicated to the aesthetic. Briefly, he realized he'd need to purchase or sew himself some more clothes. The fact that the majority of his wardrobe had been left in an alternate dimension sure was inconvenient. He would be pressing charges for *sure*. Drista had better get herself a good *fucking* lawyer.

Thoughts of legal actions against a literal goddess aside, Tommy was slightly hungry. He made it a habit to try and keep his hunger at full, because he wasn't the biggest fan of being injured. As much as he dreaded the thought of being around other people in his vulnerable sleep deprived state, there wasn't much choice if he wanted something to eat. Plus, he could probably trust Sapnap, Quackity, and Karl. At the very least none of them had a reason to hate him, far more than he could say about the people back in the Dream SMP.

Hopefully they'd have coffee. Tommy could certainly use the energy boost. He'd become something of an avid coffee drinker, given his poor sleeping habits paired with his aversion to energy drinks. He couldn't stand the smell or taste of them. Wilbur had downed the things like shots back in Pogtopia. It was probably at least part of why he went all fucked in the head. Tommy doubted it was possible to ingest so many redbulls without doing some sort of permanent psychological damage.

He momentarily tensed when he exited his room to the sounds of an argument, before he realized exactly what they were shouting about.

“-Banana peel, Karl!? That is *not* what happened! At *all!*” Sapnap's voice carried through the house to the point where Tommy could hear with perfect clarity.

He entered the living room to the sight of Karl giggling, while Sapnap glared at his phone as though it had committed horrible atrocities against him specifically. Quackity was nowhere to be seen, though the faint noises coming from the kitchen indicated he was probably cooking. Again. For some reason.

“Witnesses report- *What* witnesses, Karl!?”

“My sources wish to remain anonymous, because I have made them up.” The man in question replied with a wide grin.

Sapnap groaned, burying his face in his hands. Tommy couldn’t help but join Karl in his laughter. He didn’t even need to know the full context of the situation, it was still hilarious. Arson boy has taken the L. Everybody point and laugh!

Big Q emerged from the kitchen, sporting a couple new grease stains on the dark blue t-shirt he was wearing. He glanced between his boyfriends with fond amusement, before informing everyone that breakfast was ready. Apparently he had made “breakfast sandwiches.” The naming of this food implied that other sandwiches would be classified as lunch or dinner sandwiches, though Tommy didn’t care enough to ponder the subject further. He was far too tired.

They sat around the table, each being served a plate of food. He took a bite of the small egg and sausage sandwich, which filled far more hunger than he’d expected. There was absolutely no chance of Tommy finishing all this, but he would certainly store whatever was left in his inventory for later. It was really good.

Quackity firmly cemented himself as Tommy’s favorite member of the household by providing him with a cup of life-giving coffee. Finally, he was awake enough to function like an actual person instead of a mindless zombie. He firmly ignored the fact that, very technically speaking, he *was* a zombie. Far too unpleasant a thought for so early in the morning.

“Quackityyy!” Sapnap whined, “Karl is horribly slandering me!”

The duck hybrid quirked an eyebrow. “Is that so?”

Sapnap nodded, shoving a phone into his hand. The screen was glowing white, display several lines of black text that Tommy couldn’t make out from this angle. The teen regarded the situation with blatant curiosity.

Quackity smiled, as he dramatically read out the screen. “Number fifth-ranked hero Panda falls victim to a cartoonish mishap, allowing infamous villain Nuke to escape.”

“That is literally not what happened, and he knows it! You *both* know he used one of his explosions on my leg, and I had to go to *Wilbur* for quick healing.”

“Not according to my article!” Karl replied cheerfully.

Sapnap sent Karl a withering glare, and Tommy cackled. This only served to intensify the hero’s suffering, it seemed. “See!? Look what you’ve done! Now our son is laughing at me! He’s lost all respect for his coolest father!”

“Actually, Quackity is my coolest fa- Is way cooler than both of you.” He prayed to Prime that they hadn’t noticed his slip up, but the open delight on Quackity’s face would indicate

otherwise.

The duck hybrid leaned over the table, nearly upsetting his glass of juice, just to ruffle Tommy's hair. If the teen felt some amount of warmth at the affectionate gesture, then that was his business. Maybe it was kind of nice to have some semblance of a family.

The rest of breakfast passed uneventfully, and before he knew it they were all getting ready for work. For himself and Quackity, that meant changing into suits. Apparently Sapnap had to put on his hero costume. Tommy couldn't wait to see it. He hoped it looked stupid, so he could laugh. Karl, the lucky bastard, just had to grab his laptop and get comfortable on the couch.

Tommy looked down at his current attire. The borrowed suit. That was another problem. He'd have to make himself one that fit better sometime soon. Maybe it could be a better color, too. Like red. That would be so poggers. He made a mental note to ask Quackity for sewing materials.

He glanced up, seeing Sapnap in a shockingly familiar outfit. Aside from the panda mask on his face and the lack of a flame symbol on his shirt, he was dressed practically identical to his Dream SMP counterpart. That was a bit weird. He didn't really care enough to think about it much, though.

The second day of work for Tommy was mostly uneventful, at least for the first couple hours. He and Purpled exchanged easy banter. They really got along better than Tommy would've expected. Maybe he should try to seek out his own world's version of the guy, when he got back.

...*If* he got back. He very much wanted to believe that Drista wouldn't just strand him in an entirely new reality for the rest of his life, but... Well, she wasn't the goddess of chaos for nothing. The single word that best described the deity was "unpredictable." There was no telling what she would do at any given moment. The thought of never seeing his friends back home ever again terrified him, so he chose to postpone it for a later time. Quackity was not paying him to have a crisis while he served drinks.

The routine nature of the job came to an abrupt halt when Purpled lifted a wallet from somebody's pocket. He tried to hand it to Tommy, only to be met with a firm refusal. At the questioning glance, Tommy fixed him with a dead stare.

"We made a deal."

A second of confusion, and then understanding. "Fine. Your Dad won't mind if I leave my post for a minute, right?"

Tommy briefly considered arguing against Quackity's status as his father, ultimately deciding against it. Solely because the duck hybrid had promised him extra payment to play along. Not because some small part of him desperately craved a family, no. Not at all.

Oblivious to his new friend's minor internal crisis, Purpled began to confidently march towards the bar area. Tommy rushed to follow, not wanting to miss the show. This was gonna

be *fantastic*.

Schlatt looked up from the drink he'd been mixing, instantly becoming wary at the two grinning teenagers in front of him. As he should be. The ram didn't even have time to question them before he started floating up in the air, suspended in a beam of green and violet light. He spent a couple moments helplessly floating upwards.

For as useful as it was in a fight, his power could do nothing to save him here. The glowing beam vanished abruptly, and he fell to the ground with a thump. His hair and jacket were wet from where he'd spilled the cocktail all over himself. He fixed both cackling teenagers with his most venomous glare, but they were too busy laughing to notice.

"That was amazing, Purp! I'll commit crimes with you any day!" Tommy declared as the two returned to their actual jobs.

"Pleasure doing business with you." The other teen replied with a smile.

The rest of their shift passed by quickly, and it was over before he knew it. It seemed he was enjoying his banter with Purpled more than he'd realized. He never knew the guy was so cool.

When he got home, Tommy checked his inventory and noticed a glaring issue. He didn't have any potions, nor the supplies to make any should the need arise. While he was far less likely to end up on the wrong end of someone's sword here than back in the Dream SMP, Tommy wasn't about to take chances. He'd prefer to avoid dying again for as long as possible.

He still had half a stack of obby from Sam, more than enough to build a portal frame. If he wasn't mistaken, Quackity's house had a basement that was mostly unused. Perfect. He was thankful he had a flint and steel on him, as he didn't much feel like punching gravel. It was annoying. The task had been far more tolerable when he still had Linda, his beloved.

After changing back into casual clothing (he didn't want to risk burning or tearing the suit in the nether) he headed down to the basement. He quickly placed down the blocks of glossy dark purple obsidian in a practiced motion, forming the portal frame. A quick strike from the flint and steel, and the frame was instantly filled by swirling purple smoke.

He was about to step through, when he heard footsteps on the basement stairs. He hoped they weren't upset about the portal. If they were, he could simply break it. Obsidian was a bitch to mine, especially without a netherite pick, but he's do it if asked.

Sapnap, who having apparently just returned home was still in costume (minus the mask,) gaped openly at the nether portal. That was weird. Quackity and Karl, who descended the steps immediately after, had similar expressions of bafflement and shock. Tommy blinked at the trio in confusion.

It was Quackity who spoke first. "Tommy... what *is* that?"

"...It's just a nether portal? Y'know, a portal to the nether?" He replied. Did they really not know this? Even children knew how to make a portal!

“Uh... What’s the nether?” Karl asked slowly.

Tommy couldn’t wrap his head around this. How could they not know about the nether?

“The- The nether? Big, mostly red, very hot dimension full of fire and lava and monsters?”

Sapnap blinked. “*Hell!?*”

“Some people call it that, yeah.” Tommy said with a nod.

Sapnap paled, looking back at his boyfriends. “Babes, our son just opened a *portal to hell*.”

Apparently nether portals were not a normal thing here. Good to know. Tommy gave them a grin and an awkward thumbs up.

Chapter End Notes

To clarify! Yes, the nether does and always has existed for the AU. No, they do not know about it.

In the AU, there has never been a nether portal. Why? Because who the *fuck* would make a giant upright frame of solid obsidian and light it on fire if they didn’t already know that was how you make a portal?

Also! You may have noticed in chapter 12, but Techno referred to himself as a boar hybrid rather than a piglin. No knowledge of the nether = no contact with nether mobs = no nether hybrids. Just a fun worldbuilding quirk!

Nether Adventures Pt. 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Why- no, more importantly, *how* did you open a portal to hell!?” Sapnap demanded, looking incredibly stressed.

“Uh...” Tommy was decidedly *not* a fan of the vibes in the basement right now. If only there was an easy and convenient means of escape...

The teen shot his adoptive fathers a quick wave before stepping backwards into the swirling portal. The light overtook his vision, and he felt a slight nausea as he made his way through. Glancing around, the nether looked entirely untouched. Huh.

Quickly, he equipped his netherite armor and moved a shield to his off-hand. The stifling air of the nether felt like a weight in his lungs. The dimension was nothing if not outright hostile. Were he not used to the choking heat and stale air, he would probably have given up already. Put plainly, the nether fucking sucked. Even if you got past the incredible discomfort, there was constant danger courtesy of the lava lakes and aggressive inhabitants.

Squinting his eyes, he didn't see any signs of a fortress. Unfortunate. This meant he'd have to go and search. The place he had spawned wasn't horrible, but it wasn't fantastic either. He was high up on a netherrack bridge, above a large lake of molten lava. Tommy very pointedly kept his eyes away from the boiling liquid. He thanked Prime that he at very least hadn't spawned in a basalt delta. Those fucking sucked.

Mentally, he ran through a checklist of what he needed to gather. Blaze rods, obviously. It was literally impossible to brew anything without them. Netherwart too. It was a key ingredient in nearly every potion. Ghast tears for regen, and gold to make glistening melons to get health pots. Gold would also come in handy since he'd be needing apples.

While he was here, he might as well do some piglin trading. Try to get pearls. If his incredibly traumatic life had taught him anything, it was that you always needed some kind of escape route. If you planned on surviving, that is. Tommyinnit had seen what death had in store for him, and was not a fan. He had no intention of going back to that desolate void any time soon.

With irritation, he realized that he had a distinct lack of blocks in his inventory. Lovely, just what he needed. Yet another task. He groaned, summoning a diamond pick from his inventory and starting to gather netherrack. He really wished he had a netherite pickaxe to make the process a bit quicker. He felt his hunger bar slowly start to drop with the repetitive motion of swinging the pick. Watching in boredom as each block slowly crumbled, leaving a tiny cube that was absorbed into his inventory and added to the current stack.

Tommy had gathered less than a dozen blocks when he heard the sound of someone warping through the portal. Turning, he noticed Sapnap, Karl, and Quackity stepping through the

frame. Ah, they had followed him. He probably should've expected that. Rather than acknowledging their presence, he returned full focus to his mining. If they had chosen to join him in hell, then that was *their* business.

"Tommy!" Quackity called. "What are you doing?"

He used his pickaxe to vaguely gesture at the netherrack in front of him. "Getting blocks."

"Blocks?" Karl asked, audibly confused.

"Blocks."

"Okay..." Karl said slowly. "But why?"

The teen rolled his eyes. "To get across the fuckin' lava."

Karl made a small noise of confusion, which Tommy ignored.

Sapnap gave a very stressed laugh. "Can I ask- can I ask what I feel is a *very* reasonable question?"

"Go 'head, big man." Tommy had not once faltered from his block gathering over the course of this conversation.

"Why have you decided to enter a fucking hell portal?"

"Wanted to make drugs. You know how it is." He had almost a stack of netherrack. Fuck yeah.

Quackity wheezes with laughter, while his hero boyfriend sighed. "Tommy, that is literally illegal."

"Oh, alright. I guess I'll make *hotdogs* then." He responded, turning around with a smirk.

Deciding he had an acceptable amount of blocks for now, Tommy walked to the edge of the lave and began speedbridging. The repetitive movement of crouch-place-stand-step over and over was practically second nature. He'd always had a fondness for making paths. They were nice.

Finally reaching the other side of the lake, Tommy glanced up to see the trio staring at him with a mix of shock, amazement, and horror. Quackity was the least surprised, and he was still visibly struggling to process what he had witnessed. Tommy didn't know why they were so affected. Sure, his speedbridging skills were poggers as fuck, but it wasn't anything to warrant this sort of reaction.

"What the *honk* did I just watch!?" Karl asked, gaping at Tommy.

"...I just made a bridge?"

"No, but... *How?*"

“Blocks.” He replied with a wise nod.

Big Q gave a shrug. “Can’t argue with that logic!”

“I- I feel like we can?” Sapnap replied, being tragically ignored. Man was taking all of the L’s today.

“I’m gonna go look for a fortress.” Tommy announced with gusto.

Quackity tilted his head to the side. “Can we come?”

Tommy had fully intended on his nether trip being a solo mission. If these people didn’t even know what the nether *was*, they probably wouldn’t be able to handle themselves. He’d be forced to protect them. The three would basically just be dead weight.

...That being said, he didn’t mind the idea of them tagging along as much as he probably should. It was far from a tactically sound decision to let them join his quest for potion ingredients. He couldn’t deny that. Yet, part of him thought it would be nice to have company. He wasn’t the biggest fan of being alone in the nether.

“Fuckin’ - fine, but you better not die. If you die I will be so incredibly angry with you. I’ll throw rocks at everyone at your funeral.”

“Sounds perfectly reasonable!” Karl grinned cheerily.

The trio cautiously made their way over his thin bridge, looking entirely out of their element. Quackity and Sapnap held themselves with a bit more confidence than Karl, but both kept giving cautious glances to the strip of netherrack under their feet. Tommy felt almost offended at the notion. What, did they think he somehow left a hole in his bridge or some shit?

All three eventually made it across, standing in a line. Karl was in front, Quackity directly behind, and Sapnap taking up the rear. The trio looked incredibly uncomfortable in the nether’s inhospitable climate, but none complained. Glancing at them, Tommy processed the fact that none of them were wearing armor. They didn’t even have weapons in their hands. What would they do if a mob showed up?

Sure, they hadn’t encountered anything yet, but they were certainly present. The distant screech of a ghast was all the confirmation Tommy needed of this fact. He was on guard, but would certainly prefer if they could at least try to defend themselves.

“Do you guys have weapons?”

“I mean, yeah? Not- not *with* me, but-“

Tommy quickly cut Sapnap off. “So that’s a no. Fuckin’ *great*. I don’t have any wood, so we’ll need to find a forest so I can make you guys swords. That’s annoying.”

“...Make... Swords. Wouldn’t that take a while?” Karl asked.

The teen turned around and fixed the man with a look that he hoped conveyed exactly how stupid he found that question. "It takes, like, two seconds."

He paused his walk, noticing some nether gold ore in the wall. He returned the pickaxe to his hand, adding the nuggets of gold to his inventory. It was so much more convenient to get in the nether than the overworld.

He heard hoofsteps, and tensed. They weren't near a bastion or crimson forest, far as he could tell. What would piglins be doing all the way out here? Tommy's gaze flicked over the horizon, spotting the noise's source. Two piglins wearing heavy travel packs, likely made from hoglin leather. One carrying a crossbow, the other a golden sword.

While he could definitely take them, he'd much prefer to avoid a fight. He still didn't react well to taking damage. Trauma, or whatever. Mentally, he cursed the fact that neither he nor his travel companions had gold armor. Switching the pickaxe he held for a sword, he placed himself in front of the adults. Slipping easily into a defensive position, he watched the piglins with calculating eyes. He was infernally muttering a prayer to Prime. *Please, let them not notice. Please don't let them look over here.*

It appeared Prime couldn't give a single fuck about Tommy's half-assed prayer, because one of the piglins did glance in their direction. He watched with bated breath as they nudged their companion. Most people couldn't read piglin's expressions, but Tommy was not most people. With all the time he'd spent around Technoblade as a child (The guy was Phil's best friend) Tommy could tell these piglins were confused.

"**What are those?**" the piglin on the left asked the other, gesturing at Tommy and the people behind him.

He thanked every god that he could think of that he'd learned piglish as a child. Seeing as the group hadn't been attacked outright, despite their lack of golden apparel, he figured he should try talking to them. With any luck, the piglins would even know the location of the nearest fortress.

Ignoring the baffled and slightly fearful muttering from the people behind him, Tommy stepped forward a few paces. "**Hello. I mean you no harm.**"

Both piglins visibly did a double take, looking at him with amazement. The one on the right replied, "**you can talk?**"

"**Sure can! My name is-** Tommy." He said the name in common, since it didn't translate properly.

"**I'm Redtusk, and this is my sister Skullcrusher.**" The piglin on the left kindly informed him.

"*What the fuck what the fuck what the fuck what th-*" Quackity quietly muttered from behind his incredibly strange son.

"**Pog. Do you know the way to a nearby fortress?**"

Skullcrusher nodded. **“Sure do, do you need directions...?”**

Tommy grinned. **“That would be very fantastic. I don’t have ingots right now, but could you take this as payment?”**

He retrieved a couple nuggets of gold from his inventory, holding them out to her. She stared at his hand with a sense of wonder for a few moments, before reaching forward a clawed hand to accept his offer. Both piglins stared at Tommy, a strange expression on their faces as they told him where to go. Not wanting to make any enemies, he made sure to thank the pair before moving on.

Turning around, he saw the three grown men staring at him with very blatant shock. Quackity’s wings puffed slightly, and he gave a strained laugh. “Yeah, quick question, what the *fuck* just happened?”

Chapter End Notes

Holy SHIT the amount of attention y’all have given my silly little fic is actually WILD. Like???? More than 12k hits? Over a thousand kudos?? Over two HUNDRED bookmarks??? HOW-

I’m just,, 🙄🙄🙄 thank you all so much I do not have the WORDS for how much all of your love and support means to me,,

In other news!! I want to Talk to people, so I’ve made a discord server! I would very much enjoy if people joined, it’d be cool to have folks to talk to abt my writing and just chat with in general!

Discord Link: <https://discord.gg/ChgjS8GMDR>

Nether Adventures Pt. 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Yeah, quick question, what the fuck just happened?"

"Those are just piglins." Tommy replied with a dismissive wave.

Really, those piglins had behaved oddly. Most piglins would attack any overworlder they saw on sight unless they wore gold. From what Techno had explained to him, gold bore a lot of complicated cultural significance. Based off the things he'd heard the pair saying, neither of them had seen a human before. Plus, Quackity and his boyfriends were fully unaware of the entire nether.

Despite what many people seemed to think, Tommy was smart. He was able to pieces together fairly quickly. It appeared that nobody had ever figured out nether portals before, here. That, or it was just incredibly uncommon knowledge. The latter seemed pretty unlikely though. Something as big as the nether would never manage to stay under wraps for long. Plus, piglins were an incredibly communal species. If a single piglin had encountered an overworlder before, there would at least be vague stories or something.

From what Tommy understood, the first nether portal in his own world had been created long ago by some god. It was very unclear on which deity had created this link between the two dimension, though. The legends said that people from both realms had worked together to recreate it, ultimately succeeding. Portal creation was now considered as simple and basic a skill as building a house or swinging a sword.

Clearly, this had never occurred in the alternate world Drista had dropped Tommy in without warning. Thinking about the lack of portals, something finally clicked in Tommy's head. God. Rather than swearing by the name of a specific deity, or going with the generic exclamation of "gods," they simply said "god." He had at first brushed it off, not really focusing on the odd quirk. Thinking about this now, though? He realized it was more than likely that the gods were mostly inactive here. Obviously they'd never have figured out nether travel if the gods had never shown them there was somewhere to travel *to*!

Karl's tone dripped with sarcasm. "Just piglins? Oh wow, how did I not realize? This explains everything!"

"Not *my* fault you're uneducated!" Tommy huffed.

"Yes, because every school teaches about hell. Can't believe you forgot that, Karl!" Quackity quipped with a grin.

"No no no, we can dunk on Karl later, back up a minute. What *are* piglins?" Sapnap asked.

Tommy pondered a minute on how best to put it. The question was phrased plainly, but it was anything but simple to answer. It was like asking “what is a human?” Obviously there’s the simple answer. A sentient bipedal mammal that walks upright. Could you really summarize and entire intelligent species that way, though? Such a broad oversimplification felt disrespectful.

Realizing he had yet to answer, he blurted out the first thing that came to mind: “Basically like the humans of the nether, innit?”

Sapnap nodded slowly with a slight frown. “...So, demons?”

“No? That’s a fully different fuckin’ thing. Dumbass.” Tommy rolled his eyes.

He would’ve explained to Sapnap in detail exactly how stupid a question that was, had he not been rudely interrupted. The offender being none other than a ghaſt. He heard the signature wailing screech from somewhere behind a curtain of lava before he actually spotted the creature. Momentarily glancing back, he noticed that Karl had gone stock-still with terror. Quackity looked incredibly anxious, and Sapnap was positioning himself in front of his boyfriends.

Turning full attention back to the ghaſt, Tommy had to admit he could understand the reaction. With the context that these people knew nothing of the nether, a ghaſt was pretty terrifying to witness for the first time. It was pale white, with enormous glowing red eyes. Long, jellyfish-like tentacle hung down from it’s floating form. This was without mentioning that the creature was a bit over thirteen feet tall.

Returning the sword to his main hand, Tommy stood and waited for it to shoot. He didn’t much want to have to bridge over to the thing. He’d quite prefer to deflect a fireball and call it a job well done! Getting an explosive blast to the block beneath him and plummeting into lava was not exactly his idea of a good time. In fact, one may even say Tommy had some bad memories tied to explosions and falling!

Sure, he’d been planning on collecting ghaſt tears. That was a job better done in soul valley, though. When the creature was hovering over lava there was no point in trying. The corpse would fall before he could attempt to pry the crystalline tears from below it’s enormous eyes.

He glared at the floating mob with sharp, calculating eyes. It fired at him, and he reflected the blow with a well practiced motion. The ghaſt was hit dead center of the face with it’s own projectile, having pale white flesh torn to shreds in an instant. The air left the the creature’s inflated body, and it sunk into the fiery depths below. Nice, first try!

Faintly, he heard Sapnap whispering from behind him. “Quacks, I think you brought home the overpowered main character as our son. Oh god, I hope he doesn’t get dead parents as a backstory. I don’t want to be a dead parents.”

Karl giggled, and Quackity gave Sapnap a gentle shove. Despite the three being very clearly freaked out by the entire situation, they were able to maintain a joking tone. Tommy could appreciate that about them.

The rest of their trip through the nether in general was fairly uneventful. Sure, they freaked out a little every time they encountered a new mob. The wither skeletons particularly seemed to disturb the trio. Tommy couldn't blame them, those blackened skulls disturbed him too. Granted, it was for entirely different reasons, but still.

He never did end up making them swords. They didn't pass near any forests, and he wasn't inclined to search for one at the risk of getting lost. His sense of direction wasn't horrible, but he was no Technoblade. Best to play it safe. He simply handed his diamond axe to Sapnap, and his shield to Quackity. Tommy made very sure to inform the pair on no uncertain terms that he'd be expecting those back after their trip. He didn't much like giving up his things.

Unsurprisingly, he didn't end up gathering everything on his little checklist. Since he had three adult men to babysit, he had to play it a bit safer. At very least he'd acquired blaze rods and netherwart, as well as a decent amount of gold.

The trio were wide-eyed at the amount of the semi-precious metal Tommy had acquired, which made sense when he thought about it. It was fairly likely that all the resources under and around the city had been mined out for thousands of blocks, given the sheer number of citizens. It was probably pretty hard to go resource gathering without access to the nether to cut travel time.

Even though he still needed ghastr tears, the mission was overall a success. He'd gained more insight into the world, and he'd had a fun time with his friends. His... new family?

As much as he was overly aware of how much he was rushing into a familial relationship with these people... it was nice. They were nice to him. He was maybe even content here. While he might still have lingering worries about the world he'd left behind, this place wasn't bad. The *people* weren't bad. That was enough for him

Chapter End Notes

Gotta say, I am LOVING the vibes in the discord server. 10/10. Y'all are great.

I am posting the link again in case anyone else wants to join <3

<https://discord.gg/ChgjS8GMDR>

Never add Tommyinnit to a group chat

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When they finally returned to the overworld, Karl, Sapnap, and Quackity were exhausted. The sweat made the ash and the red dust of netherack cling uncomfortably to their skin. They also seemed a bit traumatized by the nether mobs the group had encountered. L. Honestly, blazes weren't really *that* bad! Sure, they were living masses of fire with humanoid faces surrounded by a rotating mass of floating cylinders. That could fly. Also, they could shoot fireballs. Tommy was still going to be judgemental towards his fathers though. Imagine being afraid of nether mobs, could *not* be him! (He firmly decided that since withers had to be summoned, they did not count.)

Pulling up his inventory briefly to glance at the contents, he grinned. Twelve blaze rods, a half stack of netherwart, and a stack and a half of gold nuggets. While it was annoying that he still had some stuff to gather, the trip had ended up being fun. He really hadn't expected that. He wasn't the biggest fan of the hellish dimension, but with the amusement of the trio's dramatic reaction to everything... Well, he had a good time. He was able to momentarily forget the discomfort and the negative memories tied to the blood red stone, choking scent of ash, and bubbling lakes of lava. It was nice.

Sapnap cleared his throat. "So are we gonna ignore the fact that we just got back from hell?"

"Yup!" Tommy grinned brightly.

"Cool, cool. Just checking."

"Hey, so did anyone else think those piglins looked kinda like Technoblade?" Quackity asked.

Tommy struggled to talk between bouts of cackling laughter, "wh- where can I find a tree?"

Karl tilted his head to the side like an inquisitive cat. "A... tree?"

"You know, for crafting! Craft pog."

Karl did not, in fact, know. This was plainly visible by his facial expression. Choosing to be kind and benevolent, Quackity answered in place of his stunned boyfriend.

"The park? There's one like a twenty minute walk from here."

Sapnap's brow furrowed. "Tommy... why do you need a tree?"

"Gonna cut it down so I can make things, so I can make drugs! Bye-"

"Hey, no!" Both Quackity and Sapnap said at the exact same time.

The two glanced at each other. The duck hybrid's face showed amusement, while his boyfriend was just confused. It made sense. Sapnap was on that whole "hero" thing, and didn't want Tommy to make drugs. What was this, the founding of L'manberg? He should just chill about drugs, and nobody will have to fight a war or die. Win win! Tommy was *not* sure what big Q had against him going out, though.

"Tommy, last time you went out at night somebody held you at knifepoint!"

"Wait, *what!?*" Sapnap cut in the like the overdramatic bitch he was.

Oh yeah, that. He had simply forgotten because it was not a big deal. He was far too big a man to be intimidated by petty things like muggers. That cringe little criminal had truly been quite easy to defeat. Quackity seemed concerned about it, though. Probably his parenting bird instincts or something. Wilbur used to talk about how Phil would get with those. While Tommy would normally protest that he wasn't a child, and that a little mugging meant nothing to him, he wasn't one to shame someone for their hybrid instincts. That was just fucked up.

"Fine. I suppose the drugs can wait until the sun comes to visit me. The sun cannot resist seeing my face in the mornings because I am so handsome and poggers and the only reason it ever sets is because it requires a break from my incredible masculinity."

"How about you don't make drugs?" Sapnap requested like a little bitch.

"Sapnap, my third favorite father, you sound so incredibly old right now."

"Who's the favorite?" Karl asked.

"Big Q, obviously. He supports me when I commit crime."

Karl pouted dramatically, draping himself across Quackity as though he were a Victorian lady who'd just been informed that her husband had passed away. It was practically impossible not to laugh at his antics. Tommy put a hand over his mouth to muffle his laughter. Sapnap visibly disapproved of his son's fondness for illicit activity. Hadn't he heard? In this household they love and support the total disregard for laws.

Having expertly avoided the need to explain why he knew how to make nether portals, Tommy considered his work down here to be done. Exiting the basement, he headed to his room. The day had been incredibly eventful, and he was about ready to sit and stare at the wall for thirty-one minutes and twelve seconds. His oddly specific plans for boredom were rudely interrupted by a vibration from his phone.

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Hey tommy

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Can I add you to my family groupchat?

Tommy: wyh

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Did you never learn how to spell..?

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Nevermind. I want to add you because I think my dad is scared of you

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Like half of the people in it aren't even part of the family it won't be weird

Tommy: he shdould be

Tommy: i killed a jman you kwno

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: That is

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: That is incredibly illegal, tommy

Tommy: he killed me firset

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: what

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Actually, I've decided I don't want to know

Tommy had no clue what a group chat was, but he wouldn't pass up a chance to mess with alternate Wilbur. He also felt like he shouldn't ask. It would probably be sus. He was a very normal boy from this world, who didn't know about the nether at all. Yes.

Minecraft Family Chat

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊 *has added Tommy to the chat*

XXX-XXX-XX19: Fundy, m8, who is this?

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: My good friend Tommy! Everyone introduce yourself

XXX-XXX-XX46: Quackity's creepy son??

XXX-XXX-XX46: Fundy WHY would you add him to the chat

Tommy: he lkeies me mroe thana you

Quickly, he saved that contact as "death boy." The first person who had spoken was clearly Philza Minecraft himself. Tommy pondered a few moments before simply setting his contact as "old."

Minecraft Family Chat

death boy: Someone please remove this child from the chat

Tommy: FCUCK YUO I AM A BBIG MAN

old: Don't bully Fundy's new friend, Wil.

old: Can everyone please introduce themself?

death boy: Don't

old: I'm Phil, he pronouns. Also Wilbur and Techno are my sons.

XXX-XXX-XX90: Hello! I'm Niki. I own the Fairytale Bakery! She/her

XXX-XXX-XX35: I'm Puffy, also she/her. I'm Niki's partner.

XXX-XXX-XX72: Technoblade.

old: Thanks for the contribution, Techno

XXX-XXX-XX03: I'm Ranboo. He/him I'm Fundy's coworker

Tommy: rannboo mroe ltike ranBOOB

XXX-XXX-XX03: Hey. No.

XXX-XXX-XX22: LOL ranbabooob

XXX-XXX-XX03: No. Hey Tubbo? No.

XXX-XXX-XX22: imt tubbto. He.

XXX-XXX-XX22: tutbbot

XXX-XXX-XX22: tubbo

Tommy blinked rapidly, checking to see if he'd read right. Tubbo? Tubbo was here? He honestly wasn't sure how to feel about that. Part of him was happy. Overjoyed, even. It was Tubbo! His best friend! Yet at the same time, it wasn't. This was just a stranger with his friend's name. Tommy felt conflicted. He missed his Tubbo so fucking much. He desperately wanted to cling to the closest thing he could find to his best friend, which would obviously be this world's version of the boy. But... he didn't want to replace his Tubbo. That would be shitty.

Deciding to postpone his dilemma for a later date, he chose instead to be a menace. He quickly created some more contacts. Ranboo? "boob boy." Easy. Niki? "grilrilboss." Puffy? "theorpy animal." Techno? "oink oink." Tubbo was the hardest to make a decision for, but he ultimately settled on "bees??" Fantastic names all around. Tommy truly could make a career out of this.

Minecraft Family Chat

Tommy: hekelo im big man Tommyinnit i liek womeb drugs and cireme

oink oink: Not sure if you noticed, but crime is illegal.

Tommy: nrot whenr I do it

Tommy: im too pogchamp foro lwas

theory animal: Good for you!!

bees??: smae bsoisman

boob: “bsoisman”

bees??: shutt up boob bouy

boob: that is Not my new nickname

Tommy: it is

Tommy: yupure jsut in denial king

boob: I actually hate it here

oink oink: L.

old: So! Tommy!

old: How do you know Fundy?

Tommy: we foguht in the wear together

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Yes that did happen

death boy: WHAT WAR??

Tommy: the war for independance

death boy: do you mean independence?

Tommy: no

grilrilboss: Kids shouldn’t fight in wars????

Tommy: who the fcuck wodud fight then

Tommy: alaos not a kid im 17

theory animal: that’s still a kid

grilrilboss: Adults? Adults should be the ones to fight wars??

Tommy: oh theye dis too

Tommy: wveetyon fights wars

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Is that supposed to say everyone

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Please turn on autocorrect.

boob: Why is THAT the part youre focusing on????

Tommy: phil the kidna guy to see hsi son go “is abtyone gonna stab thsi” and not wair for and answr

old: WHAT THE FUCK?

Tommy: techboba the kinda guy to see a teneenager stuck in a box say “is anyone gonana mrider this” and bot wait foeer abs anaswer

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: True

oink oink: HEH!?

boob: T

boob: Tommy??

Tommy: wilbur the kdidna giy to see a prefectdly fixaeable country go “it was nevwr meant to be” and dnot wait foe an answer

death boy: WHAT does that even MEAN

Tommy: yes.

bees?? I leieke thsi guy

death boy: I dont.

old: We know, Wil.

There was a sharp knock on the door to his bedroom. Pocketing the phone, he ignored the continued buzz of notifications and stood. He opened the door, finding himself face to face with Karl. The man was fidgeting nervously with the sleeves of his oversized hoodie, and giving Tommy a strange look. The teen decided he did not like this.

“Hey Tommy... I- uh-“ Karl glanced at the floor.

“Yeah big man?”

“I know your secret!” Karl blurted out abruptly, the sudden loudness seeming to catch even himself by surprise.

Tommy backed up a couple steps, anxiety written plainly on his face. He gave a forced laugh. “I- aha- I don’t know what you’re talking about! Secrets? Me? Noooo... never!”

Karl moved his hand forward to place on Tommy’s shoulder, pulling it back when the teen flinched away from the touch. He gave the gentlest smile he could muster, doing the best to project honesty.

“It’s okay, Tommy. I won’t tell anyone-“

Anxiety thrummed in his veins, washing over him in waves. “There’s nothing to tell! What would you even tell them? Tell them how shockingly handsome I am?”

“No I- you don’t have to lie to me. I figured it out.” Karl looked him in the eyes, “I know you’re a time traveler.”

...What?

Chapter End Notes

The funniest part is that AU!Karl personally has no relation to time travel of any kind. He doesn’t understand the Irony-

Tommy Translation Time!

Tommy: why

Tommy: he should be

Tommy: i killed a man you know

Tommy: he killed me first

Tommy: he likes me more than you

Tommy: FUCK YOU I AM A BIG MAN

Tommy: ranboo more like ranBOOB

Tommy: hello im big man Tommyinnit i like women drugs and crime

Tommy: not when I do it

Tommy: im too pogchamp for laws

bees??: shut up boob boy

Tommy: you’re just in denial king

Tommy: we fought in the war together

Tommy: who the fuck would fight then

Tommy: also not a kid im 17

Tommy: oh they did too

Tommy: everyone fights wars

Tommy: phil the kinda guy to see his son go “is anyone gonna stab this” and not wait for an answer

Tommy: technoblade the kinda guy to see a teenager stuck in a box say “is anyone gonna murder this” and not wait for an answer

Tommy: wilbur the kinda giy to see a perfectly fixable country go “it was never meant to be” and not wait for an answer

bees?? I like this guy

Karl definitely knows what's going on!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

From the moment they first met, it was clear something was off about Tommy. Now, Karl didn't mean that in a bad way! The kid was great. He couldn't be happier to have Tommy as his son. Still, something about him was *weird*.

The myriad of scars scattered across his body, the constant exhaustion and pain in his eyes... That kid had seen some things. At first Karl just figured he'd come from a rough background. Things like that weren't all too rare for kids from the outer ring, sad as that was. Seeing as whatever had happened to Tommy was obviously traumatic, he decided it was best not to pry.

Still, it was hard to keep himself from theorizing. He'd always been an inquisitive person, something that had led to his successful career in journalism. Slowly, bit by bit, he put the pieces together.

Tommy was clearly trying to be subtle about it, but Karl hadn't missed the kid giving quizzical glances to his laptop. Even someone who grew up on the streets would know what a laptop was. There wasn't anything strange about his that would warrant such confusion.

That on its own hadn't been enough for him to figure anything out. No, he didn't quite understand until the hell portal incident. When he and his boyfriends had passed through the massive purple frame, they encountered Tommy. He was wearing glowing platemail armor that hadn't been there only moments ago, swinging a pickaxe with practiced ease.

Karl noticed the way Tommy moved effortlessly in the undoubtedly heavy armor, as though he were well acquainted with it. Armor like that was incredibly outdated. Heroes, villains, and vigilantes alike went with material that allowed more ease of movement. Even those who prioritized protection over flexibility wouldn't use full plate armor. Bearing that weight while doing any sort of running or fighting was considered impractical because of the time it took to build up those muscles.

The way he casually knew how to navigate hell, and apparently open portals. The- whatever the honk you could call his ability to create bridges with weird gestures. The armor. The cluelessness about modern technology. All the pieces came together, and Karl figured it out.

Tommy was from the past, and also probably a wizard. That second part he was a bit less sure on. While the stuff Tommy did *could* possibly be a power, it didn't seem cohesive enough. Some powers were a bit odd, but nothing as seemingly unconnected and random as this. Maybe there were wizards in the past. What was Karl, a historian? He didn't know these things!

It was obvious that Tommy was trying to hide it. He wasn't sure *why*, but Karl would respect the kid's wishes. He spent some time debating what to do. Should he ignore it? Pretend to be clueless? That felt dishonest, though. Ultimately he figured the best course of action was

telling Tommy upfront. Maybe he could offer the kid support. Help him out a bit. This decision is what led him to the kid's door.

"I know you're a time traveler."

Tommy had no fucking clue what had led Karl to believe this, but at least his secret was still safe? Prime, this was ridiculous. Time travel. In what world would *that* even make sense?

He briefly considered telling Karl the truth, but decided against it. As much as he wanted to trust these people, they had met only a couple days ago. Tommy had only been honest with Quackity because he shared the name and face of one of the only people he was sure he could trust back home. Trust in regards to the Dream situation, at very least.

Tommy forced himself to focus back on the conversation at hand. Even the thought of Dream's primedamned *name* could be enough to send him spiraling on bad days, and he didn't want to deal with that. Having trauma could be incredibly inconvenient. Who would've guessed?

No, no. Focus. He was focusing. It was focus boy time. Not sad boy time. What was he going to say to Karl? It was almost painful, how open and supportive the guy seemed. He was the kind of person it was difficult *not* to trust. He had very innocent eyes, like a cow.

Realizing he was taking too long to answer, he just started talking. "Uh- why- how did you figure it out, big K?"

Tommy winced internally. It appeared he would be pretending to be a time traveler now. Whoops. Fuck, was he going to have to learn this world's history? That sounded boring. Maybe he would just simply make shit up and see if he could get Karl to believe him. A much more logical and rational course of action.

"Well... your armor, for one. Also I'm pretty sure you don't know what a laptop is." Karl gave him a gentle grin.

Might as well get information about this world while he has the chance. "Laptop? The fuck is that?"

"It's the thing I was using to write that article about Sap. They let you use the internet- do you know what the internet is?"

"Quackity explained it to me. Kind of."

Karl looked surprised. "Oh, does he know about the time travel too?"

"...Yes."

Quickly, Tommy grabbed his phone and sent a text. Better safe than sorry.

Tommy: if kral talsk to you about me time treavling plag along

motherfuck: You cant just SAY THINGS and never explain them!

Tommy: I can and I havbe

“Did you need to talk about anything else, big man?”

“No, that was it. Just- I’m here for you, ok? If you need help with anything just ask.” Karl gave him a pat on the shoulder before exiting the room.

Well. That was certainly a conversation he’s just had.

Seeing as he had nothing better to do, Tommy reopened the group chat. Might as well see what those fuckers were up to. Perhaps he would even confuse them more. He quite enjoyed messing with Wilbur.

Minecraft Family Chat

death boy: Oh also

death boy: Ranboo are you ok?? Fundy told me what happened

oink oink: Something happened to Ranboo?

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: Yeah he said he fell down the stairs to his apartment

Wilbur’s Furry Son 🦊: He has reall bad bruises

boob: ah yes, that

boob: I’m fine! Don’t worry

bees??: hes toto tall its a safeti hazaerd

Tommy: iamgine losing a fight to soem stairs

Tommy: cringe

boob: Ok. Well that’s just rude

old: It is past ten! What are you children still doing up?

old: Go to bed, you little shits.

Tommy: fcuck you osld man

oink oink: He has a point, Phil.

oink oink: You are very old.

old: SHUT.

boob: Guys don’t call Phil old

old: Thank you, Ranboo.

boob: Let him live in denial a little longer

boob: He's happy like this

old: OK.

old: FUCK OFF.

Tommy: crareful hes crafting a belt

death boy: What does that even mean??

Tommy: wuoidnt you like to know, fishfucker

death boy: WHAT??

bees??: fishfucker

grilrilboss: fishfucker

boob: fishlover

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Fishfucker

oink oink: Fishlover.

death boy: WHAT DID I EVEN DO?

Tommy: fucjed a fish

With those parting words, Tommy's job here was complete. He put his phone on the charger Quackity had given him (he had no clue how it worked) and left Wilbur to suffer. Was this bullying? Maybe. In Tommy's defense, it was very funny.

He went to sleep that night with a feeling of satisfaction. It had been a good day.

Chapter End Notes

Ranboo b a tiiiiiiiiiny bit... sus, no?

Tommy Translation Time!

Tommy: if karl talks to you about me time traveling play along

Tommy: i can and i have

Tommy: imagine losing a fight to some stairs

Tommy: fuck you old man

Tommy: careful hes crafting a belt

Tommy: wouldn't you like to know, fishfucker

Tommy: fucked a fish

The calm before the storm

Chapter Notes

Oh, the chapter title? Haha, I'm sure that doesn't mean anything. Don't worry about it, heart emoji!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was Tommy's third day as an employee at the Golden Goose casino. Strangely enough, he found himself looking forward to it. Sure, the customers could be snobby and rude. Yes, Tommy wasn't a huge fan of wearing his ill-fitting suit borrowed from Charlie. Yeah, having to interact with Schlatt so often was not his favorite thing in the world. But going to work also meant committing crimes and hanging with his new buddy, Purpled. It really did surprise him how well they got along.

Breakfast was nice. He engaged in their playful banter a bit more than in the days previous. The food was fantastic as always, probably because Sapnap was barred from cooking entirely. Karl was acting a bit weird, no doubt because of his conversation with Tommy last night. It was hardly noticeable though, and he was somehow being even nicer than he was before. Tommy, remembering an earlier idea, had taken the time to ask for some sewing supplies and fabric. Karl said he'd get some, which was just incredibly poggers. There was certainly a reason he was ranked higher on the dad list than Sapnap.

It was in Quackity's car that Tommy realized the corners of his mouth were sore from smiling. Glancing in the side mirror, he could swear his eyes were a shade bluer. Crazy the difference that could be made in just a couple days. It felt like so long ago that he was running for his life with promises of torment and the echo of sirens ringing in his ears. He really was happier here.

The routine of his job was almost comforting. So simple compared to battle plans and politics. All he was expected to do was know what drinks people had asked for, and then deliver them. He also got plenty of time to laugh and joke around with Purpled. The security guard would occasionally have to step in when a patron got particularly rowdy, but for the most part was free to chat. Steal, too, but what was theft if not a good bonding activity?

They had already generously relieved a couple oblivious patrons of some extra cash (the paper was, in fact, currency, according to Quackity) when something happened. Tommy had noticed the shift in Purpled's behavior near instantly. The relaxed posture had filled with tension, violet eyes narrowing. The normally laid-back security guard had the focus of a hawk on the hunt, watching a certain gambler with extreme scrutiny. Tommy followed his eyes, but was unable to immediately pinpoint the cause of his friend's change in behavior. It appeared to just be a man in his mid-forties, wearing a rumpled gray suit and a smug smile.

Purpled's antennae twitched. "Did you see that?"

"No?"

"The way he moved his hand. He was hiding a card in his sleeve." Purpled hissed.

The teen pulled out a dagger that had been concealed within his finely tailored purple suit jacket. The weapon itself was clearly well cared for, with a gleaming blade. The handle was polished wood, with a golden sphere for a pommel. Tommy briefly wondered why he hadn't simply stored it in his inventory, but decided not to question it. Purpled was clearly a professional. He simply watched in fascination as his friend approached the man.

Purpled took careful, calculated steps. The carpet under his feet was hardly disturbed by the movement. Quite impressive, honestly. Tommy did remember the alternate version of the guy being a mercenary. Some things definitely stayed consistent between worlds, it seemed. The security guard had a stony expression on his face as he gave the dishonest gambler a light tap on the shoulder. They two couldn't be heard over the chatter from other patrons and the ringing music of slot machines, but Tommy could see they were arguing. The gambler seemed to get more and more agitated by the second, while Purpled never once lost composure. The dagger was held up in clear threat, yet the man refused to back down.

Suddenly, Purpled was shoved backwards by an invisible force. The man was shouting now. "-Little *brat!* How *dare* you threaten me? Do you know who I am?"

Ok, yeah, no. This guy was clearly a wrong'un. Tommy prepared himself for a fight. Purpled tried to use his power, but it was interrupted by a sharp kick from the gambler. Now Tommy was pissed. Who did this guy think he was, coming into big Q's casino, cheating, and then attacking Tommy's friend? Bastard behavior. He quickly stowed his drink tray and notepad away in his inventory, swapping them out for a sword and shield. If the man wanted a fight he could have one.

Crossing the room quickly, Tommy placed himself between his downed friend and the aggressive bitch. "Do we 'ave a problem here?"

"This is none of your concern. Who even are you?" The man's tone was full of annoyance.

"I think it *is* my concern, seeing as you're harassing my friend. Also I literally work for this casino. Bitch."

The man gasped in offence. "The *nerve-*"

Purpled, who had used the distraction to his advantage, now had a dagger to the gambler's throat. "I will ask you to leave *one more time.*"

He huffed, but allowed himself to be escorted out of the building in a humiliating manner. Not only was he outnumbered, but with a blade to his throat he wouldn't be winning any sort of fight. Judging by the lack of musculature, the man was no warrior. The fact he had even been able to knock Purpled over was solely because he had the advantage of surprise. Tommy put away his weapons and returned to his post. The situation was handled.

Purpled returned a couple minutes later, having made sure to get the guy's photo to add to the Golden Goose's ban list. His usually immaculate suit was a bit wrinkled up, but he was otherwise unharmed. The patrons who had stopped to gawk at the brief scuffle had all returned to their games.

"Are you alright, king?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. I could've handled it but..." Purpled gave him a small smile, "thanks for the help. I appreciate it."

Tommy gave him a friendly pat on the shoulder. "No problem."

When he got back home, he was immediately greeted by a grinning Karl. "Hey! I have something for you!"

It turned out that he had more than made good on his promise, going absolutely overboard with tailoring stuff. There were two different sewing kits, an entire case of different threads, and several large rolls of fabric. He even got a jar full of different buttons! Tommy's face lit up as he looked at the veritable treasure trove of sewing supplies.

Giving his second coolest father a quick "thank you," he scooped the materials up in his arms and headed to his room. It was time to get to work.

Sewing was something Tommy had loved for a long time. It was relaxing, and it felt good to make something tangible with his own two hands. He had first picked up the hobby when he was ten and wanted to make a stuffed animal for Tubbo's birthday. The little plush duck was incredibly simplistic and a bit misshapen, but Tubbo had absolutely loved it. He'd named it Benson, and promised to cherish it forever. Tommy wondered if he still had it somewhere.

Few people knew this, but Tommy had been the one to sew the original L'manberg uniforms. It had taken him a few nights of nonstop work, barely sleeping in a hurry to get them finished. He had wanted to make Wilbur proud. Tommy had run out of darker pigmented dyes after the first four, having to make Fundy's in pastel. The hard work was worth it, though, for the praise he received afterwards.

He'd stopped sewing, for a while, after the elections. Not all at once, mind you, but gradually. It was harder and harder to muster up the will to create when things just kept getting worse. Plus, he just didn't have the time. In Pogtopia he'd felt a constant pressure to train, gather materials, do *anything* to contribute to the revolution. After the sixteenth, not only did he feel worse than ever, but had a lot to do. He was vice president of the broken nation, having to put most of his focus on the reconstruction effort. Then, well. Exile. He didn't particularly feel the need to dwell on that period of his life at the moment.

It was Puffy that had suggested he get back into the hobby. Something about doing something low-stress that made him happy. Rediscovering old passions and all that. He was really grateful for the advice. He did feel happier when he was able to look at something he'd sewn, to see tangible proof that he'd done something good. That he was capable of doing something good.

Tommy was glad he wouldn't have to keep using the suit he'd borrowed from Charlie. Plus, if he had to wear a suit, he would make sure it was the best anyone had ever seen. He selected a ruby red fabric, as well as a golden one for the trim. He was glad to find a couple buttons nearly the exact shade of the gold fabric. Color coordination. He was thankful to discover that one of the sewing kits came with a small tape measure. He wouldn't have to guess for the measurements. He settled on a simple black for the undershirt and pants, and the same golden color for the tie. The casino was literally called Golden Goose, and he was going to fit the theme.

Now that he had a good idea of what he was making, he set to work. Tommy was determined to have the suit finished in time for work tomorrow even if he had to spend the entire night on it. Once all the fabric had been cut, it was a simple matter of stitching it together. He felt muscle memory take over for the repetitive motions, and his mind began to wander. Really, what he was doing now wasn't all too different from when he'd made his L'manberg uniform if he thought about it. Creating himself a new set of clothes, one that symbolized that he was part of something. That he belonged somewhere. Even if this was just a job, outside of that he was part of Quackity's family. Strange as that still was.

In the end, he didn't actually have to stay up all night. While he'd taken a brief break from sewing to eat some dinner, the suit was finished by around two in the morning. Pogchamp. He was definitely happy with what he'd made. It looked nice and professional, while still being *him*. He couldn't wait to show Quackity. He wondered what the duck hybrid would think. Tommy hoped he'd be proud.

When he went to get changed into work clothes the next morning, he could barely contain his excitement. He hadn't told his father what he'd made, electing instead to simply show them. Putting on the suit for the first time, it was definitely an upgrade. It was more comfortable, and didn't restrict his range of movement in the slightest. The thick fabric he'd chosen helped to hide his unnatural thinness, making him appear a bit healthier. Plus, he finally had a tie! The flashy colors of the suit helped him to differentiate it from any memories tied to Manberg or L'manberg.

When he stepped out of his room, Quackity's jaw dropped. "Where did you- Karl said you asked for sewing supplies. Tommy, did you *make* that?"

He shifted on his feet nervously. "Uh, yeah?"

"Tommy, it's amazing!" The duck hybrid beamed.

He couldn't suppress the pleased grin on his face if he had tried. "Thanks, big Q."

"SAPNAP! KARLOS! COME LOOK AT WHAT TOMMY MADE!" He shouted, turning his head towards the kitchen.

The two joined Quackity in showering Tommy with compliments, making the teen flush red in embarrassment. He wasn't sure what reaction he'd been expecting, but certainly nothing like this. The amount of praise they gave him was honestly overwhelming. He couldn't say

he hated it though. It felt good to have his hard work appreciated. He *had* put a lot of effort into it.

When he actually got to work, he felt a bit more confident in himself. With the fitted suit, he really felt like he fit in. Purpled also told him it looked good, which was nice. They had jokingly decided to call themselves the colorful suit bois, given that their apparel was far more saturated in color than any of the other casino employees. The two grandly declared their superiority over those with more monotone clothing, taking extra time to dunk on Schlatt in particular. They always took time to dunk on Schlatt for something, though.

Once his shift at Golden Goose had ended, Tommy decided to do something he'd been putting off for far too long. He was going to finally brew those potions. There was a problem, however. He needed wood for a crafting table, stone for the brewing stand, and glass bottles. Plus, he'd never even picked up those ghastr tears! He really had been procrastinating. It was something he was quite good at. One might even call him a *pro* at it.

He decided to try to gather wood and blackstone in the nether, since it was just more efficient. He'd still need sand for glass. That was a problem for later Tommy. Right now Tommy was going to try and trade for some pearls. There was something just so undeniably comforting about having a convenient escape route.

motherfuck

Tommy: ay big q

Tommy: im going to hwl dont folliw me

motherfuck: Normal texts to receive from your son.

Now that he'd ensured he wouldn't make Quackity go all panicky and worried, he could focus on his task. He of course made sure to change into his normal outfit first, not wanting to damage the nice new suit. Once he had his armor equipped, he stepped back through the portal. Time to get to work

...Tommy would like to go on record and say this fucking sucked. He was just mining gold for trades right now, and he was already suffering. The oppressive heat and thick haze of netherrack dust in the air seemed to weigh on him more heavily now that he was alone. He was sure it was merely his imagination, but still. Not exactly a fun time.

Plus, there was so much more to do. He still had to gather blackstone and nether wood of some kind. He didn't much feel like wandering the city in an attempt to find a tree or a spot where he could mine without it disrupting someone's build. The amount of people around every corner made his skin crawl. Perhaps it said something about him, that he preferred literal hell over having to be near other people. At least the attack patterns of nether mobs were consistent and predictable.

Deciding the amount of gold in his inventory to be satisfactory, he moved on to task number two. Wander around until he found a biome with the stuff he wanted. He vaguely

remembered seeing a soul valley a bit past the fortress, but wasn't sure if that was the best way to go. It'd no doubt be plenty of extra walking on the already long journey to find a forest or basalt delta, given he hadn't spotted any on the way there or back last time. Was it worth the risk of going in another direction, with no guarantee he'd find anything at all?

Being the big and incredibly handsome and brave man he was, Tommy decided to be bold and walk in the opposite direction he'd gone to find a fortress. Only small men were intimidated by petty things like the threat of getting lost or spending too long in hell and getting heat stroke. Heat stroke? More like hehe stroke because it was so pathetic it made him laugh. If the temperature tried to make him sick he would simply say no. RIP to people who died of heat stroke, but Tommy was different. *He* only died of Dream!

Wow, would you look at that! He'd stumbled upon a crimson forest without even noticing. Poggers. Summoning the diamond axe to his hand, he started chopping. He was glad to finally be able to craft again. Combining all his gold into ingots would certainly free up some inventory space. Pondering for a moment, he decided to make a gold sword and a chestplate. Since these piglins would've never interacted with overworlders before, he wanted to make a good first impression. They wouldn't have the pre-established understanding and expectations in regards to trading.

Towering up a couple blocks to stay out of reach of hoglins, he opened his inventory and put a cube of crimson stem into the crafting slot. Taking the created planks, he quickly made a crafting table and placed it against the nearby leaf-like growths. Making the things he'd planned, he moved to make a brewing stand before groaning. He'd momentarily forgotten that he didn't have any fucking cobble. Honestly, the fact that he was forced to live like this. Walking around with absolutely none of his favorite block. The world truly was cruel. Also, he was now remembering why he'd been keeping an eye out for basalt deltas.

A quiet snort sounded from somewhere nearby, prompting Tommy to look around. Standing nearby, observing him, was a piglin. Oh, this was perfect! Breaking the block under his feet, he stepped down and held up his hands in a friendly fashion. Belatedly realizing he was still holding an axe, he quickly returned it to an empty slot in his hotbar. Oops.

“Hi! I have a gift for you!” He pulled out the newly made chestplate, gently placing it in the piglin's clawed hands.

Their eyes widened in disbelief, staring down at the armor piece. That was... a weird reaction. The piglin seemed awestruck, almost. It was just gold? Unless something was different in this world, but Tommy was pretty sure it was common to give items made of gold as gifts in piglin culture.

“This is- this solid gold! I- thank you so much!” The piglin said, voice full of shock and joy in equal measures.

Tommy was visibly confused, but chose not to voice it. **“Uh, yeah. No problem. Do you have any ender pearls I could trade for? I've got gold.”**

He punctuated the statement by pulling an ingot from his inventory. The piglin's eyes gleamed as they caught on the precious metal. Their ears were pricked up in interest. If

Tommy was being honest, it was a bit adorable.

“I don’t have any with me, but I can take you to my bastion? Someone there will have some.”

He shrugged. **“Lead the way- uh. What’s your name?”**

“Oh, my apologies. I’m Ghastbane.”

“Tommy. Nice to meet you!”

“The same to you.” Ghastbane tilted their head upwards slightly in what Tommy recognized as a gesture of respect and deference. He wondered why.

The trading ended up going fantastic. Not only did he get a stack and a half of pearls, but they also had ghastr tears and blackstone. Incredibly convenient, as it meant less walking for him. He traded gold for the pearls, but the piglins had all but insisted on him taking the other materials for free. It was weird, but he wouldn’t complain about free shit.

They also had glass potion bottles, but the bottles themselves were really weird. They were apparently made from soul sand, which he found fascinating. He didn’t even know it was possible to melt soul sand. The glass itself had a dark ashy tint, and he could see faint impressions of faces in it when it caught the light at just the right angle. In other words, it looked cool as fuck.

He ended up getting sidetracked, asking the bastion’s potions master several questions. Seeing as they had no access to water, or any other overworld material, the potion recipes they’d developed were wildly different. For the base liquid, they used juice strained from young crimson fungus and warped shrooms, or even occasionally hoglin blood. Some of the potion effects were the same, while others he had never heard of. For example, potion of withering. Tommy had been beyond delighted when the experienced piglin agreed to teach him that recipe. It seemed like it could be nasty, and incredibly useful in a fight. He’d like to see Dream try to deal with *that!*

Tommy headed home with new knowledge, an established positive relationship with that bastion, and all the stuff he needed to start brewing some drugs. A fantastic day for the Tommyinnit community. He truly was taking nothing but W’s in the new world. A very exciting and welcome contrast to his life in the DSMP.

Now that he was back in his room, Tommy was ready to get to work. It was only, like, eleven pm. Sleep was for babies anyways. He had *potions* to make! Remember kids, making drugs should always be your top priority. Prime, Tommy was such a good influence. He should be a parent or something. Maybe he’d pull an alternate Quackity and just inform some random kid he saw that he was their father now. Clearly this was an okay thing to do, if he ignored how everyone aside from Karl and Sapnap had reacted to it!

He placed down his crafting table and brewing stand first, before trying to decide what to make first. As much as he’d love to try his cool new recipe, it required hoglin blood and

with rose thorns. Seeing as he possessed neither, he would just have to suffer. Or go get them later. He wasn't too torn up over it, though. Harmful potions were only really useful as splash potions, and he didn't have any gunpowder. The city was well lit enough that he hadn't seen any mobs wandering around, so he couldn't just kill a couple creepers. He made a mental note to ask Quackity about gunpowder at some point.

Deciding to make regen first, he realized an embarrassing issue. He's forgotten to fill the water bottles. Heading to the bathroom to get water real quick, he turned on the sink and filled them up one by one. While doing this menial task, he briefly wondered if the soul glass would affect the potions in any way. It appeared he would have to, as professionals say, "fuck around and find out."

Carefully setting the three bottles on the stand, he added the netherwart for awkward potions, as well as some blaze powder to fuel it. Staring at the slowly brewing potions, he slumped over in boredom. He'd forgotten how much waiting was involved in the potion making process. What's the fun of drugs if you have to sit around doing nothing while they cook?

It was moments like this that he was eternally grateful for the fantastic gift Quackity had so kindly given him. He was, of course, talking about the phone. A device which served the sole purpose of making Wilbur's day worse for no reason. At least, that's what Tommy used it for. If anyone used it for something else, that's because they were small brained and doing it wrong.

Minecraft Family Chat

Tommy: im makking drugs

Tommy: wiblur if you use this as an excuse to start a country i will be very angry

death boy: I'm sorry, drugs??

Tommy: yuo should be sotry

boob: Wow, fundy. You sure do have great friends

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Tubbo tried to set me on fire once, you have no room to talk

boob: I- yeah, he did do that...

bees??: srsij pog

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: ??

bees??: arson pog

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Glad to see you feel so much remorse for your actions!

bees??: 👍

death boy: So you guys are just ignoring the fact that Tommy is making drugs?

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Yup!

boob: Mhm

bees??: i wads gonna dm him to asdk for soem

death boy: I hate it here

Tommy: L

oink oink: L

death boy: Techno?? Why are you supporting the drugs child

oink oink: He might be manufacturing illegal substances, but he's also making fun of you, which is something I strongly endorse.

Tommy: GET REKT

Glancing up, he realized the awkward potions had finished brewing. Tossing in a ghastr tear and some more blaze powder, he grinned. It would be good to have some potions on him. Just in case. Between his full netherite, the pearls, and the pots, he was gonna be stacked. He'd like to see someone try to kill him now! Tommy had seen the afterlife, and he was absolutely the fuck not going back. No chance.

Getting comfortable, he settled in for a long night of brewing. He would've done it, too, if it hadn't been for Quackity. The duck hybrid seemingly had a sixth sense for Tommy's poor sleep habits, because he received a text at around midnight that simply said "GO THE FUCK TO SLEEP." Ah, well. Potion making could wait a bit, he supposed.

It was currently Tommy's day off. Now, he wasn't sure why Quackity had decided that he gets *Fridays* off, of all days, but he had. He was gonna miss hanging out with Purpled, but he couldn't deny that it was a relief to have a day without having to talk to the gamblers. Many of them were very rude and annoying. Also he wasn't supposed to call them a bitch to their face, which was an incredibly difficult rule to maintain. The only reason he even tried was because he didn't want to disappoint big Q.

Yes. Day off. A perfect opportunity to make more potions. Staring at the brewing stand across from him, he came to a sudden realization. If this world didn't have nether travel, the people in the overworld probably didn't even know about potions. Cringe. Could Tommy make massive profits off of this? Most definitely. That would unfortunately be a lot of effort, and he would prefer to continue vibing. If other people wanted to have the magical juice, they could simply learn how to open portals to hell. It's as easy as that.

He ate his breakfast as quickly as possible, wanting to return to his brewing. He'd already been procrastinating for days, he didn't exactly need more setbacks. Tommy was very excited to be able to announce to Sapnap that he now had several bottles of drugs. Seeing as he was

now certain that the hero thought he meant actual narcotics, as opposed to the cool special liquid that does magic on you, it was even funnier.

His creation of the fun time good elixirs that created mystical effects when consumed was interrupted by the sound of voices outside his room. Now, Quackity and his boyfriends were the opposite of quiet. It wasn't the fact that he heard them talking that made him pause in his activity. No, it was because he heard a fourth voice. One he couldn't quite make out from where he was sitting, as it was muffled by the door. Leaving his hilarious enchanting sauce of many fantastic properties and reactions™ to bubble on the brewing stand, he decided to investigate.

Entering the living room, Tommy froze in shock at what -or rather, *who*- he saw. The forest green hair. The glowing green eyes with black scleras. The patches of moss-colored scales dotting his face. There were differences, of course. He was a bit less muscular, and missing his signature gas mask. But, with the voice and appearance, the man's identity was undeniable. It was Sam Awesamdude himself. Well, okay then.

Tommy exhaled sharply, unsure of how to proceed. On one hand, Sam (derogatory.) The guy had trapped him in a cell with Dream, and left him to fucking die. Not to mention the whole thing with Ghostbur. Sam was certainly not on Tommy's list of good people. He wasn't even on the list of people-that-are-kind-of-okay. On the other hand, in direct opposition to the previous statement, this was actually *not* the guy that left him to die. It was just someone in a different world that shared his name and face. Who was in Quackity's living room, chatting with him. For some reason.

Catching Tommy's eye, Quackity smiled brightly. "Oh, Sam! I may have forgotten to mention, but you're a grandfather now!"

The creeper hybrid whipped around at lightning speed, gaze landing on Tommy. He looked absolutely dumbfounded. "Quackity, where- *how* did you get a kid?"

"Big Q found me outside and said 'you are my son now.' And then he put me in his car and brought me to his home." The duck hybrid nodded along enthusiastically as Tommy spoke.

"I- You- That is *kidnapping*! You can't just kidnap people, Quackity!"

"You've never complained about me violating the law before." He pouted.

"You've gotta draw the line somewhere, you've gotta draw a line in the sand. You gotta look inside yourself and say 'what am I willing to put up with today?' Not fucking THIS!"

Quackity stared at his father, completely taken aback. "Dad, did you just quote-"

"Well, I think it's time for me to be going. It was nice seeing you, Quackity. Don't kidnap anyone else-"

"Hey, hey, hey. No. Answer the fucking question-"

"Bye!" Sam exited the house.

Quackity spent a full minute just standing in the middle of his living room, gazing blankly at a wall as though it held the solutions to all his plights. Tommy would be concerned if it weren't so funny. He wasn't quite sure what it was about the weird little monologue Sam had given that had thrown him off so badly, but this was free entertainment. If only he had snacks, and the empty hunger to eat them, so he could properly enjoy the moment.

Regaining some semblance of composure, the duck hybrid turned to his son. "You're good at acquiring fathers. I seem to be in need of a new one. Got any tips?"

Tommy nodded seriously. "Okay. Step one, be friends with god."

Sapnap sat sprawled across the couch, with his legs across Quackity's lap. Karl was perched on the arm of the couch for some reason, scrolling through his phone. It was a peaceful moment. As much as he loved having Tommy in the house, he was happy to have some time with just his boyfriends. Speaking of their very legally obtained son, Sapnap had a theory about the kid. It was hard not to wonder, especially seeing as there was still a *portal to hell* in their basement. Now that he was thinking about it, this was a perfect opportunity to discuss his hypothesis with Karl and Quackity.

Staring blankly at the wall opposite him, he decided to voice his thoughts. "Hey guys? I think I figured out what's up with Tommy."

He didn't notice the surprised glance that Quackity and Karl shared over his shoulder.

"Oh yeah?" The duck hybrid asked, with a hint of caution in his voice. Well, that was weird.

"I think our son is a demon."

"He- *what!?*" Karl asked, giggling loudly.

"No, no! Hear me out! Remember when we were in hell?"

"I forgot about that, actually. Wasn't a big deal for me." Quackity replied sarcastically.

That was a fair response. It would be incredibly difficult not to remember that day. Bubbling lakes of lava, patches of flames flickering at random on the blood red stone. The entire experience had been surreal and terrifying. That wasn't even mentioning the monsters inside the fiery realm, which were something straight out of a horror film. He had seen a lot of weird shit throughout his career as a professional hero, but never anything like *that*.

"Ok, well do you remember what he said? When I was asking him about the pig things?"

"Nope! Anyways, do you want stir fry for dinner?" Karl asked cheerfully.

"Ooh stir fry? Wait, no. Don't change the topic. I asked if the pig guys were demons, and he said that demons were a very different thing. And he looked at me like I was an idiot-"

"-That's because you are." Quackity chimed in.

“-Also he opened a portal to hell and was walking around like he owned the place. I think he’s a demon!”

Karl blinked at him. “...So that’s a yes on the stir fry?”

Chapter End Notes

It has been brought to my attention that some people are having a hard time telling what Tommy is saying over text, so i present to you this new segment in the end notes! I am planning to go back and add this to all previous chapters it applies to tomorrow, but right now I am *severely* sleep deprived bc I really wanted to get this chapter done in time to post. Oh, also! The translation will apply to Tubbo too. Just anything that is badly misspelled, generally.

Tommy Translation Time!

Tommy: im going to hell don't follow me

Tommy: i'm making drugs

Tommy: wilbur if you use this as an excuse to start a country i will be very angry

Tommy: you should be sorry

bees??: i was gonna dm him to ask for some

What takes days to build can shatter in a moment

Chapter Notes

Tommy text translations have been added to previous chapters! Hope this helps

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Waking up, Tommy realized something. Today marked him having stayed a full week in this household. Huh. From what he'd seen, this world was just so much brighter. It was better. The heroes and villains had their televised battles, and there were petty criminals, but no wars. In the majority of battles he witnessed her, which were conveniently televised, the goal was to incapacitate rather than kill. Maybe everyone having only a single life had that effect?

He stretched. Time for another day of being the biggest man ever and committing theft. As one does. Checking his phone, he noticed that he'd woken up a bit earlier than usual. That was a bit odd, since he hadn't even had a nightmare. Come to think of it, he'd barely had any at all since his first night here. A confusing development, but one that was more than welcome.

He exited his room to find himself alone. Apparently he'd been the first to wake. Or, in other words, Tommy had *won* at waking up. That was a completely legitimate thing that was real and also possible. He mentally clapped for himself, drafting an acceptance speech for the title "Champion of Not Being Asleep." Even Philza Minecraft himself would surely be impressed by such a monumental achievement.

He was halfway through figuring out how exactly to thank his many wives for helping him get where he is today when he heard the sound of a door opening. Quackity emerged from his room, visibly still half asleep. No wonder Tommy had defeated him so soundly and taken his title. The duck hybrid gave him a quiet greeting, shuffling his way towards the kitchen. He was probably going to make breakfast again.

Quackity was the one to prepare breakfast every day that Tommy had been here, and it seemed he wasn't looking to break his streak. The reason that Sapnap was barred from any and all food preparation was no mystery, but Tommy wondered about Karl. Why couldn't father number two contribute to the household by creating a meal? Did he have something against food?

Tommy headed into the kitchen and voiced his queries, earning a laugh from Quackity. "No, he doesn't hate food. He just never learned how to cook. I'm the only one in this family that can be trusted to make a decent meal."

Ignoring the emotions that rose at the word family, Tommy gave the most offended gasp he could muster. "How do you know I'm not secretly the world's greatest chef, hm? Awful pre-

sum-chew-us of you.”

“Okay, well, firstly it’s pronounced presumptuous. Also,” Quackity raised an eyebrow skeptically. “Can you cook?”

“Nope!”

“...Do you want to learn?”

The question took him by surprise. Tommy hadn’t really thought of it before. It would be nice, he realized, to be able to make good food for people he cared about. He’d never really had an opportunity like this before. To be taught something non-essential, purely because he wanted to learn. Not like the life-or-death combat lessons from Techno. Not like having to figure out how to keep the things he stitched from coming apart at the seams, with nobody there to guide him.

“I’d love to, big man!” Tommy nodded enthusiastically.

Quackity clapped his hands together. “Alright then. Let’s get to work!”

His number one father, the only one who fully supported his passion for violating laws, guided him through the process of making scrambled eggs. Thankfully, none of the eggs created chickens as Quackity cracked them into the bowl. That would’ve been a bit of a pain to deal with. The process was actually simpler than Tommy had expected. Once the eggs were stirred, he put them into the pan and stirred them more. He flipped them around to get all the sides cooked. That was pretty much it, aside from adding salt and pepper.

Tommy gave a brilliant grin as he carefully placed strips of bacon into the pan. “Look!” He declared, pointing. “It’s Technoblade!”

Quackity cackled, repeatedly slapping the counter. The statement was incredibly accurate, and completely factual. Finally, the catch phrase had been disproven. If Technoblade never dies, how come he was currently sizzling in a pan, hm? Checkmate, motherfucker.

Tommy mentally backtracked the last sentence a bit. For some reason, he wasn’t all too fond of the word checkmate. Best not to dwell on that. The rest of what he said he strongly stood by, though. Take the fucking L, Techno. You have, as many scientists say, “gotten rekt.” How tragic. Truly, the pig must be feeling unmatched despair.

The Golden Goose was renowned as the finest casino in the city for a reason. The building itself was pristine, elegant and dripping in luxury without becoming tacky. The establishment boasted many patrons from high society, despite being situated in the middle ring rather than the center. Golden Goose, true to its name, brought in money at a nearly unbelievable rate.

To say Schlatt had been shocked when the owner of the prestigious casino contacted him with a job offer would be an understatement. This had been about a week after he had been publicly disgraced and fired by the higher ups in the Hero Committee. In that time he’d

applied for several jobs, never landing so much as an interview. Yet, here was this decently paying job as bartender, offered up on a silver platter.

He'd accepted, of course. It wasn't clear why Quackity decided to hire him, but Schlatt wasn't one to look a gift horse in the mouth. Even if he could probably scrape by with the leftover money from his hero work, it was good having something to keep busy with. He wasn't exactly eager to make the sacrifices that living off savings would entail, either. So, Schlatt had been incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

Then Quackity decided to hire Tommy. Apparently the brat was his son. For whatever reason, the kid seemed to have a major grudge against him. Hell, Tommy had nearly stabbed him with a weird magic sword the first time they met. It was ridiculous! There was only one explanation Schlatt could come up with that sort of made sense. The kid had probably been some minor criminal he'd apprehended during his previous career.

That didn't explain why the newly appointed security guard had chosen to be his accomplice in making Schlatt's life harder. As far as he could figure, Purpled just lived to cause problems on purpose. A quality that would've been incredibly amusing, were Schlatt not his preferred victim. He strongly wished he could be a simple onlooker to the kid's malicious and controlled brand of chaos.

Apparently actually doing their jobs was far less important to the teens than making him suffer. Tommy let out another loud, abrasive laugh as Schlatt struggled to regain balance. Purpled gave him a cold smirk as he was once again levitated into the air. Schlatt sighed. When would his suffering end?

Tommy walked through the front door with a grin on his face. Another day at work, another day of wonderful profits. Honestly, his salary didn't even matter with the money he got from crime. Sitting in his inventory at the moment was a good amount of cash, or as Quackity would say, fat stacks. He was very skilled in the art of business.

Voices from the living room reached his ears, and Tommy froze. The smile dropped from his face. No, he was hearing wrong. It wasn't- no. Of course not. Tommy was just imagining things.

Sapnap was laughing. "Oh my *god*, Dream--"

He lost the ability to process what he was hearing as his ears started to ring. No. No no no. It couldn't be- It couldn't be *him*, could it? But the voice he'd heard was one he knew all too well. Tommy shook his head quickly, wiping the clammy sweat from his hands onto his trousers.

Oh, this was another nightmare! Yeah, that was it. He would just wake up, and everything would be fine, and he'd be safe. He would be able to be happy. Dream wouldn't be there. Quackity was saying something, but it was nearly inaudible over the blood pounding in his ears.

Tommy pinched himself sharply, flinching at the sudden pain. His eyes impossibly widened further as he processed the implication. This was real. This *couldn't* be real. He was supposed to be safe here. He was supposed to be okay. His breath started to shake, and he took a small step backwards. Tommy's mind was forcibly pulled back to the vivid nightmare from his first night in the house.

"Did you really think you could get away from me?"

But he *had*! He had gotten away, and that was supposed to be the end of it. He'd escaped, far away, where Dream could never touch him again. Could never tear him down with words, in a way nobody else was able. He was supposed to be free from the manipulation, false kindness like oleander honey. Quackity, Karl, and Sapnap had declared themselves his fathers. He really believed they would protect him, but...

"Who do you think let me in?"

Sapnap was laughing. He had sounded happy. Like he was glad to have Dream there. Like they were friends. Numbness washed over Tommy's trembling form in waves, but he was aware enough to notice Quackity's hand on his shoulder. The contact burned. Stepping back quickly, all Tommy knew were the toxic words Dream had spit in his nightmares.

"You'll never be safe, Tommy."

Even if the conversation was just a twisted vision his mind had conjured, the sentence rang true. He was always in danger, from something or another. It was stupid of him to have thought this world would be different. Some things never changed. He took an uneven breath, refocusing on the situation at hand. The next step was clear. Tommy did the only thing he could.

He ran.

Chapter End Notes

:)

Tommy on his Usain Bolt arc?

Chapter Notes

Don't worry Karlnapity dads content enjoyers, the Bois aren't gonna give up on their son. It may be a bit before they can find him, though...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Running. His feet pounded an uneven rhythm into the ground as he ran. The harsh impacts against the pavement sent jolts through his muscles, but it was hardly noticed in a haze of panic. All he knew was that he was in danger. He needed to get away, as far away as possible. It seemed that no matter where life led him, he would always end up running again. What a horrible fate that was. Every chance to rest, to heal, eventually proven to be nothing but a short reprieve. Then he was running again.

The situation was terribly familiar, bringing a strong feeling of *deja vu*. *Oh*, he realized. *It's just like a week ago. In Logstedshire*. Wasn't it just cruel? The way his story unraveled? An actor, unwillingly shoved onto the stage, forced to repeat the same torturous scene only with a different backdrop. Just seven days after the original chase, and he was once again fleeing from Dream.

Things were a bit different this time. He had full netherite. He had potions. Also, he remembered, retrieving a smooth glassy orb from his inventory, he had plenty of pearls. He was prepared. Tommy launched the pearl in his hand as far as he could, teleporting with a flash of purple sparks.

He had no clue where he was going. There were no shining beacons to lead him to safety. No home to return to. No Phil to promise him protection. He had no one. He was alone. Tommy gritted his teeth, trying to shove down emotions so he could focus on getting as much distance between himself and Dream as possible. He tossed another pearl.

The handmade golden tie felt like a noose around his throat. His suit had been tailored with freedom of movement in mind, yet it still felt too tight. The meaning behind the clothing made it feel like sweetberry thorns digging into his skin. What he had naively seen as a symbol of belonging now served as nothing but an unwanted reminder. Telling him in poisonous whispers that he was an idiot for letting his guard down.

He really was, wasn't he? Maybe there was a reason so many people saw him as nothing but a stupid kid. Such a childish wish, for things to be different this time. For them to be okay. He knew he shouldn't have trusted them. He knew everyone he cares about ends up betraying him, one way or another. He knew, he knew, he knew. He knew it was going to happen, so why did it still hurt so badly?

He knew, so why could he feel tears burning at his eyes? Not falling, never falling. He had that much control at least, even when once again his world was crumbling around him. Trust and hope collapsing like sand under his fingers. The mirage of safety once again proven a mere figment of his imagination. Nothing but a pretty fantasy. Like a mirage that faded away when examined too closely. It's what he expected. It's what always happens.

So why? Why does grief claw at his chest with the strength of an army? Rattling his ribcage, tearing him apart from within. Why does his throat constrict in pain, struggling to intake air? His inability to properly breathe caused him to imagine a faint smell of smoke. The feeling of being choked with emotion identical to that of dark, heavy ash in the aftermath of an explosion clogging his airways and weighing down his lungs. Why does he mourn for what he always understood was never real? Those warm smiles drew him in like a siren song, but he was well aware that the enchantment of sirens only led to a cold demise in the ocean's depths. He was all too familiar with the sensation of drowning. Why did he allow himself to believe in false promises of home and family when he knew how it would end? How it always ends. Ever the same.

Betrayal was an inevitability. As certain as the rise and set of the sun. It seemed increasingly likely that Tommy truly was the fool everyone took him for, because something in him was still surprised. Some small, traitorous part of him had denied what he had always foreseen. Had turned a blind eye to the understanding of what lay ahead. Having his love and trust once again discarded as easily as dirt. It was what happened, what always happened, what would surely happen again. He has no delusions to the contrary.

Somehow, no matter how many betrayals. No matter how many times he told himself it was coming. No matter how many times his heart was crumpled like a poorly written first draft of a letter, not worth a second glance. No matter what, it still hurt the same. The burning, tearing, ripping pain of mourning his relationship with another person he thought was a friend. Struggling to come to terms with the fact he was wrong, always wrong. That agony remained as unchanging as the truth that he would experience it over and over, for however long he lived.

The thoughts swirling around his head were repetitive and entirely unhelpful. He needed to focus on the present. He was still running. His dress shoes were ill-fitted for the task, but it hardly mattered. The enemy doesn't wait to strike until you are prepared. Exactly the opposite really, if they had any intelligence or sense of strategy. Tommy had already used up all but two of his pearls, which he was saving for an emergency. He cast wary glances behind himself every once in a while, but mostly focused on the path ahead.

The path ahead. Could it really be called that? Paths are meant to lead to destinations. Tommy didn't have that. He had no goal, no end, nowhere to go. Lacking direction, he was left with nothing but the knowledge he wasn't safe. He never really had been.

His surroundings. He needed to pay more attention to those. The fear had given him tunnel vision, causing him to ignore everything around him in favor of creating a significant amount of distance. Tommy had no clue where he was, but he supposed that didn't matter. After all, it wasn't like he could go back.

It was difficult to hear the noises of the city with his heartbeat pounding in his ears. Slowing his pace a bit, he saw smoke rising in the distance. Clearly from something large, and not nearly far enough away for his taste. The adrenaline was starting to fade, forcing Tommy to realize just how *tired* he was. A few people on the street gave him strange looks, to which he responded with a sharp glare.

He decided to duck into an alleyway to recover for a moment. Just to catch his breath. Sinking to the ground, a part of him winced at the grime he was getting on his special suit. The rest of him couldn't give a fuck. Wasn't like he planned on ever wearing it again after he found something to change into. He internally cursed the fact his normal clothes had been left at home - at *Quackity's house*. This was all he had. With a bit more force than necessary, he tugged the tie from around his neck. Maybe he should have tossed it to the ground, abandoning it entirely, but... Tommy chose not to dwell on why he'd stowed away the stupid piece of fabric safely in his inventory.

He didn't have time to worry about it, as he was met with the sound of crunching gravel. Someone was approaching him. Their gait was confident and heavy, hinting at some level of power. Whoever it was carried a scent of debris and smoke, which was nothing if not a bad sign. Tommy's head snapped up, and he inhaled sharply.

He recognized this person in front of him from the news. This was a villain. Like, an actual supervillain. One with explosion based powers too. Not something Tommy would very much like to deal with. Especially not right now, in the middle of a mental breakdown. Fuck. Hopefully if Tommy was cool and casual about this, the guy wouldn't hurt him. He didn't think he'd be able to handle taking any damage at the moment.

He kept his voice controlled, and thankfully it didn't break. "You're that villain ey? Nuke?"

"That I am" replied the villain in a very familiar voice.

Tommy looked again, and felt a bit stupid for not putting the pieces together earlier. The guy had literally worked on nukes in the DSMP! In hindsight, it was so incredibly obvious! Because the guy standing in front of him wasn't just some random villain. No, of course not. In what circumstances would he get a break like that? With his luck? No, this was some random villain who Tommy knew the alternate version of.

Standing before him, the man who he'd seen on the news blowing up countless buildings, was Jack. Fucking. Manifold.

Chapter End Notes

SURPRISE MOTHERFUCKERS!

Jack (an adult) calls an adult for help

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The definition of a villain was a bit loose. What differentiated a villain from a mob boss or a common criminal was nothing but status and public opinion. It was almost entirely influenced by the media's coverage. Code names and costumes certainly helped, if one wanted the title, but there weren't guarantees. Occasionally vigilantes would get mislabeled as villains because they happened to cross the wrong hero.

This was decidedly not the case for Jack Manifold. He was a villain, through and through. It was a title he wore like a badge of honor. His explosive powers had Jack Mani-fested at age twelve, and he'd kept them carefully secret. He saw the potential he had, and decided to use his powers for evil. In his defense, most of those buildings looked like absolute shit. The people within sucked as well.

He hadn't actually started committing crime when he was so young. No, that particular chapter of his life had started a bit later. Growing up in the outer ring, he understandably harbored a lot of resentment towards the rich bastards living their lives in the center. Resentment towards the heroes, who couldn't be bothered to give a fuck about the less well-off people residing in the outer reaches of the city. Towards the people in power, who did nothing about the crimes targeting impoverished citizens unless they could get good publicity from it. The system disgusted him.

The underlying anger he'd always held towards the heroes and wealthy folks who cared only about themselves simmered for most of his life. It wasn't until he was sixteen that his anger boiled over into hatred and burning fury. That fateful day where he lost both of his parents, and nearly perished himself. He had to crawl out of the burning wreckage of his home with his own two hands, and not a single hero bothered to make an appearance. He'd lost everything, and none of the rich people in their stupid little mansions gave a fuck. He wasn't going to just sit there and take that.

There was certainly a reason nearly all of his attacks were targeted in the inner ring. Vengeance was a sweet thing, even if causing destruction so similar to that which had ruined his own life grated on him at first. He'd gotten over that little dilemma years ago. Those fucks deserved whatever they got. Jack had never claimed to be a good person, anyways.

All of these words to say he wasn't the most morally sound. He reveled in the devastation he created. He had *killed* people. He was one of the top villains, right below that guy leading the Winged Alliance, who had been in the game for quite a while and was rumored to have never lost a single fight. At the moment, Jack was actively fleeing a crime scene and hoping to avoid getting tracked down. His last encounter with Midas had been plenty painful. He wasn't looking for a rematch at the moment. Witnesses to his escape route were something he absolutely did not need right now.

...But, when he looked at the kid in front of him, he couldn't feel an ounce of irritation. The lad was clearly on the verge of tears, and shaking like a leaf. He was wearing a well made suit, but it was wrinkled and a bit grimey. Not to mention the numerous scars visible on his hands and face. When the teenager spoke, a poorly concealed tremble was audible in his voice. Someone had clearly fucked him up badly.

Jack's first thought was "*This kid needs help,*" with the second being "*I am not help.*"

So, he did the first thing he could think of. Pulling his phone from a concealed pocket within his flashy silver jacket, he quickly tapped the contact. He was choosing to do something good, and call someone who'd be willing and able to assist this kid. The phone rang four times, before he heard a faint "*Hello?*"

Jack smiled awkwardly under his mask. "Hey Niki..."

Tommy felt anxiety thrum in his chest as he listened in on Jack's side of the conversation. The name the apparent villain had spoken ringing in his mind. *Niki*. By the sounds of what was being said, Jack wanted her to come here. To... help Tommy? That confused him to no end. Also frightened him, just a bit. He was a big enough man to admit when he was afraid. Most of the time, anyways.

Part of him thought back to the days after L'manberg had gained independence. When Niki had joined, they'd all been so happy to have her there. She brought a new kind of warmth and happiness to their little country. Tommy couldn't eat anything sweet without missing those peaceful sunny days, with her as a friend. He didn't know what he'd done wrong to make her resent him.

The Niki in this world was a different person. She had never tried to kill him. Probably never would.

Tommy yearned for the lost bond he had with his own version of her. That sentimentalness wasn't enough to make him stupid, though. It wasn't as though he had magically forgotten the events that had literally just transpired with Quackity. Trusting someone just because he wanted to cling to a friendship that only existed in another universe was a mistake Tommy would not repeat.

He forced himself to breathe deeply. It was a struggle to maintain what semblance of composure he had left, but primedammit he had to try. He'd prefer *not* to broadcast exploitable weakness, thank you very much! Especially not to somebody who was quite literally a villain that blew up people's homes. Tommy had had his own home blown up a few times and could confidently say it was a shit experience. Zero stars. He would be leaving a *scathing* review.

"-Kid?"

Oh, Jack was talking to him! Always on the Manifold grind, it seemed. The villain pushed a chunk of long blue hair out of his face, presumably staring at Tommy. It wasn't like he could tell through the blue and red goggles the guy was wearing. As someone with plenty

experience needing to read the body language of a person whose face was obscured, Tommy could tell Jack was waiting for an answer of some kind.

“What is it, big man?”

The villain looked awkward. Sucks to be him. “My friend’s girlfriend- well, she’s *also* my friend but not as much as the other friend- that’s not the point. My point is, you’re clearly going through shit and so I have called someone to help you or something. Her name is Puffy. You stay here, I’m gonna just-“

Jack used a grappling hook to get onto a rooftop, and rocketed away. He was entirely unaware of Tommy having a small internal crisis below. The teen unconsciously brought a hand up to tug at his hair, before stopping himself. He wasn’t supposed to do that when he was stressed. Instead, he pulled on the edge of a sleeve.

Puffy was coming here. To help, supposedly. What exactly Jack decided Tommy needed help with was unclear, but that wasn’t the big issue right now. No, he was more worried about Puffy. What would she be like? Would she still be the same caring person he knew? Well, obviously not the *same*, but, still. Could he trust her?

That question was easy enough to answer. An obvious no. He shouldn’t trust *anyone*, not until he’d spent a decent amount of time with them at very least. Tommy had let himself grow far too comfortable in his week with Quackity, and paid the price. It wasn’t something he’d be doing again.

Should he follow along with whatever she was coming to do, though? Should he even be waiting here for her arrival? He drummed his fingers against the dingy gray wall of the alley to relieve some nervous energy. As much as his instincts given by countless wars and betrayals screeched at him to run the other way, it was a tough decision.

Ultimately, he came to the conclusion it was best to at very least speak to the woman. See what she was like in an actual conversation. Maybe that was just him clinging to his life before Drista sent him here, but it was *Puffy*. He- well, he really missed her. She’d helped him a lot. She was one of the few adults he’d ever met that genuinely *cared*. Who never did anything to hurt him.

So, his mind was made up. He’d stand in this alleyway and wait. Wasn’t like he had anything else to do, or anywhere to be. He scowled, shoving down the childish part of him that really wanted to ask her for a hug when she arrived. He wouldn’t do that. Absolutely not. He wasn’t a *complete* idiot.

When she got a text from Niki saying that Jack had found a scared child in an alleyway who needed help, Puffy sort of just accepted that this was the kind of thing that happened in her life. After the shark tornado incident, nothing could surprise her. Plus, who would she be to turn down a child in need? That would just be *villainous*! She giggled internally at her own joke.

Niki probably would have gone to help the kid herself, but she was currently busy. Making macarons was a very delicate process, and not one that the baker would enjoy having to redo. Even with her incredible talent, she couldn't just whip complicated desserts out of thin air. A lot of work went into her creations.

So, Puffy was currently driving her car to a random alleyway somewhere around the border between the inner and middle ring. Apparently Jack, being the very unhelpful man that he was, had given very few details about the kid. She honestly had no clue what to expect upon her arrival. He'd said the child was "somewhere between 10 and 18 probably, I don't fuckin' know!" A lot to go off of, truly.

Seeing the kid, Puffy could understand how even *Jack* had realized he needed help. He was clearly in a terrible state, and anxiety was plainly visible in his every movement. He was definitely a teenager, and the well-made suit he wore certainly raised some concerns. Puffy had a lot of questions, but she voiced the one that she believed to be most important first.

"Do you need a hug?"

Okay, maybe Tommy was a little bit stupid. Or just weak willed. The tiniest bit moronic, one might say. Wait, no, that was self deprecation. Talking about himself like that was not very poggers according to Puffy- not this Puffy, but *Puffy*. (he wondered if the woman currently in front of him would agree?) Tommy was actually an incredibly strong and intelligent man, and he accepted the hug because he deserved it. Big men can be comforted sometimes. He could let himself be hugged and still keep his guard up, he was very talented like that.

The moment was- well, it was nice. It had been a while since he'd really been held like this. Despite the fact he was quite a bit taller than her, something about the way Puffy embraced him felt protective. It felt safe. Also very warm. It was probably because she was a sheep, and sheep have wool, and wool makes blankets. That's the only reason he felt so warm. Of course.

That brief peaceful moment was abruptly shattered when she asked him a question, one that ripped away that feeling of gentle warmth and returned the painful tightness to his chest. Ice refrozen in his veins, all the while he did his very best to keep outward reactions to a minimum. He pulled away from her, stepping back a couple paces. The question was so simple, only six words, but they felt like dull serrated daggers sawing through his flesh.

"Do you have anywhere to go?"

"Not anymore- No. I don't." He winced, hoping that she hadn't noticed the slight break in his voice.

"Well, I'd prefer if you weren't staying on the street... it's not much, but you could take the couch in the apartment I share with my girlfriend."

He should decline. He really should. It wouldn't be too difficult to build himself a small little shelter, even if it were just a temporary thing in the back of a poorly lit alleyway. He had more than enough experience to get by on his own. He didn't need anyone. ~~That was a lie.~~

Taking his chances on the street would probably be much safer than going with her and having to deal with another inevitable betrayal. It was the smart option.

But... he was just so *tired*. People often said that Tommy was someone to give into his emotions far too easily, and they were right. He wanted to feel warm again. He didn't want to be alone. Maybe the pain of losing someone was still worth the happiness you got when you were with them. He wouldn't *trust* her. He wouldn't let himself hope for anything. But maybe, maybe he could let himself have this. For a day or two.

Being one to fall back in humor in tense situations, Tommy gave his best grin and said "Is this a kidnapping? Are you trying to lure a minor back to your home right now?"

"I- well, it wouldn't be the *most* illegal thing I've done today!" She said with a laugh.

Tommy feigned wonderment. "Puffy, are you a girlboss?"

A serious nod. "I am, yes."

"Just don't gaslight gatekeep girlboss at me. I hate when I get gaslighted because then I don't know what is real." He replied casually.

Her face flickered through at least four different emotions, before settling on concern. "Well, that's worrying!"

"I should make that one of my middle names. How do you like the sound of Tommy Careful Danger Worrying Kraken Innit?"

She blinked. "That sure is one of the names I have ever heard!"

"Thank you!"

As Tommy buckled himself into her car, a thought suddenly occurred to him. *This is gonna be another surprise adoption, isn't it?*

Chapter End Notes

Yooo how are y'all feelin? Was GONNA include some Quackity POV this chapter but I don't think it makes sense to do it yet, so that might be postponed a chapter or two.

ALSO. For my Beloved theorists! And also people who just haven't memorized every offhand thing I've revealed. List of currently mentioned heroes and villains!

Heroes:

Techno - Midas

Wilbur - ???

George - ???

Sapnap - Panda
??? - Speedster

Villains:

Jack - Nuke
??? - “The leader of the Winged Alliance”
??? - Glitch

Go wild with the theories, folks! I love to see it!

TVs, Google, and other things nobody understands.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The apartment was nice. The whole place was illuminated by a soft orange light, adding to the feeling of warmth the place radiated. A faint scent of vanilla filled the air, having soaked into the walls from Niki's constant baking. There were several shelves lining the living room walls, populated by small trinkets and well-cared for plants in pots. Across from the "TV" sat a plush red sofa, long enough for Tommy to lay on comfortably.

Everything about the place spoke of home, of safety, of contentment, and Tommy... He *ached*. It was everything he yearned for, but knew he couldn't have. He wanted nothing more than to belong here. To be happy. He would have to settle for clinging to whatever moments of fleeting peace he was allowed in this little home. It reminded him of Snowchester, in a way. A home, a lovely one, but never his.

Puffy had said she was going to get him clothes tomorrow. Nothing that her or Niki owned would really fit him, so he'd have to sleep in his suit for the night. The thought served only to highlight the complicated tangle of emotions in his chest. He didn't want to damage the suit. He didn't want to let it so much as wrinkle. He wanted to throw it away. He wanted to burn it, reduce it to nothing but a pile of burning cinders. His heart continued to contradict itself, and he futilely pressed his palms over his ears as though it could quiet the thoughts bouncing around his skull. He couldn't wait to get other clothes to change into, if only so he could stop thinking about it.

It was late. The sky was completely black outside the window, devoid even of starlight. Cold and empty. Tommy felt the same. Niki had come home at some point earlier, looking so happy. So bright. Tommy could hardly remember when his Niki smiled at him like that, with no hidden grief or malice. Her and Puffy had gone to bed about an hour ago, leaving Tommy to sit alone on the sofa with his thoughts.

It was so warm. The soft blanket that Puffy had handed him, the sofa as soft as any bed he'd ever slept on, even the air. Everything was so warm, and Tommy could feel nothing but painful cold. It was something he'd grown used to, after his revival. During his stay at their house, Quackity and his boyfriends had chased away that stubborn chill, only to bring it back tenfold. Tommy decided not to think about it. He was so tired.

Sunlight pierced through a gap in the curtains, stabbing Tommy directly in the eye. Stupid shiny sky orb, bullying him specifically. He would like to file a complaint. He didn't remember falling asleep, but based on the exhaustion weighing him down he wasn't out for long. Unsurprising. Tommy yawned, pushing himself up into a sitting position. What crimes would he commit today?

Being an intelligent man, he wisely decided to postpone any criminal activity until he got new clothes. Some food would also be ideal. As a great man once said, "me me hungry."

Words that he carefully pondered every day. Like an orb, as Ranboo would say.

Boredom settled in quickly. His eyes darted around in search of something to entertain himself, since Puffy and Niki did not appear to be awake yet. His gaze finally landed on the “TV.” Quackity had explained that it was a large box for watching shows. Shows were like plays but they did it before you watched it so you didn’t have a chance to laugh at their mistakes. News also existed, which Tommy had to admit was more convenient than hoping people would inform you when something important happened.

How to activate this shows watching device was a mystery, one that not even the smartest and best read scholars had cracked. There were no buttons on it. Sighing, he realized he would need help. Pulling his phone from his pocket, he felt something sharp and painful when he noted the number of missed calls and messages from Sapnap, Karl, and Quackity. He decided to ignore them for the time being.

Minecraft Family Chat

Tommy: how teh fuck deos tv works??

death boy: You’re telling me you know how to make drugs

death boy: but NOT how to operate a television??

Tommy: drugs aer eaasy

death boy: Can’t even spell

death boy: You’re literally like a child

Tommy: yuo shoukd go baka to being dead

death boy: ??????????

Wilbur was, unsurprisingly, useless. Nobody else was even answering him. Pretty rude, honestly. It appeared he would have to try and use google. A gargantuan task, but one he would do his best to accomplish. By whatever means necessary.

Brow furrowed, he carefully typed “how to use the tv” into the bar at the top. He waited. Nothing was happening. This fucking sucked. Carefully glancing around his screen, he noticed an enter button. Pressing it, he was met with a weird circle before several blue sentences appeared with gray sentences below them. Prime, he wished he’d practiced his before.

After at least twenty minutes of difficult labor, he figured out that he needed a “remote control.” It appeared the weird smooth rectangle covered in tiny buttons actually had a purpose. It took an embarrassing amount of trial and error, but he got the TV to turn on. Fantastic accomplishments being made today. He should’ve gotten an achievement for that or something. Though, since there was no general chat, achievements were kind of pointless. How could he flex his incredible skills on everyone in the world now? Something to look into at a later date.

The program playing on the TV seemed to be news, given the fact that it said “Hero Watch News” in the corner. Tommy was so good at picking up on subtle clues. The screen broadcasted a battle in progress, between a blurry green person and a blurry person dressed in all black and gray. Green was creating little transparent black shields, cutting off attacks from the other person.

“-ber three hero Guardian Angel is currently at the scene, effortlessly holding off the unnamed villain. So far collateral damage is at a minimum-”

Tommy leaned forward, squinting to get a better view. Now that he was paying attention, he saw large black wings and a familiar striped bucket hat on the green figure. The teen snorted in disbelief. “*Philza Minecraft pog.*” He thought, watching Phil effortlessly incapacitate his opponent.

Ah, so that’s why he wasn’t replying in the group chat.

Quackity bounced his leg restlessly against the fine leather chair, resisting the urge to get up and pace. He was trying to keep some semblance of professionalism, and the way his buttery yellow feathers were fluffed in agitation already didn’t help. This meeting was important. He had to keep his cool. An incredibly difficult task, considering his son was missing. Sure, he’d only had Tommy for about a week, but there was something about that kid. It would be actually difficult *not* to form an emotional attachment to him.

He couldn’t get that image out of his mind, how Tommy’s face looked when painted in terror. For the life of him, he still couldn’t figure out *why*. What had happened to make him so scared? One moment everything was fine, and the next...

“*Did I do something wrong?*” The duck avian muttered to himself, for what was decidedly not the first time.

He’d ducked his head into the house momentarily, just long enough to shout to his boyfriends and let them know what was happening. In those couple seconds, Tommy somehow managed to make it so far away he couldn’t be seen. Quackity had a vague idea of which direction the kid had gone, but his hours of searching had turned up nothing. It was currently the next day, and Tommy hadn’t answered a single text or call.

Something was clearly very wrong.

His mind ran through a million different worst-case scenarios, each of them more horrible than the last. Tommy could have been kidnapped, or hurt, or *killed*. He was a kid alone on the streets, not in his right mind with judgment clouded by panic. Anything could have happened to him. The not knowing was weighing heavily on Quackity.

His catastrophizing was interrupted by the even click of dress shoes against polished wood floors. The person he was here to meet took a seat across from him, tilting his head to one side inquisitively. They were dressed in a pristine white hoodie, with a shining golden chain holding a featureless round pendant hanging over his chest. His hood was pulled up despite being indoors, hiding a pair of cropped dog’s ears.

“You requested a meeting?”

Quackity took a deep breath, giving him time to put up a facade of easygoing confidence before he began to speak. “Hello, Punz. I’ve got a job for you.”

“You know I don’t do that anymore. I’m out of the game, moved on to greener pastures.” The former mercenary said firmly.

Quackity leveled them with an unimpressed look. “Ok, stop talking like you’re all dramatic. You quit taking mercenary jobs to become a professional basketball player.”

“It’s a stable paycheck. Plus, the only way someone like me can get an apartment in this city.”

He blinked in confusion at the second half of that statement. “What? I- nevermind. Look. My son is missing, and you’re the best option to track him down.”

“Bold of you to assume I *am* an option.” Punz replied without hesitation.

Quackity felt his composure starting to crack, allowing a bit more emotion into his voice than intended. “Please, I- I just want him to come home. I have to know if he’s safe.”

Their resolve was starting to slip, hesitation visible in their posture. “Well, maybe I co-“

A third voice busted into the conversation. “What the fuck are you guys doing. You still aren’t allowed in the same room together.”

Purpled stood in the doorway with his arms crossed and brow slightly furrowed.

“It wasn’t *that* bad!” Quackity protested.

Really, did the kid *have* to enforce his stupid little rule? Who was he to order them around, anyways. Punz was his older sibling, and Quackity quite literally his boss.

“It was *SIX. HOURS.*”

Both adults glanced away in embarrassment. They knew exactly what he was referring to. The pair had decided to play a game of darts against each other, once. It had lasted a bit long, both parties too stubborn to call it quits and accept a tie. Quackity ended up winning through nothing but sheer luck, with one of Punz’s shots hitting another dart on the board and clattering to the ground. Luck *was* kind of Quackity’s thing, though.

The teen crossed the room in a couple long strides, picking his boss up by the collar of his shirt as though he were scruffing an unruly cat. Quackity was forced to accept his loss of dignity as he was dragged from the room. This wasn’t the first time Purpled had done this to him, and he knew resistance was futile.

“Why are you here, anyways?”

Quackity sighed. “It’s Tommy he’s- something happened, I don’t know... he ran off and I couldn’t find him. He won’t answer any messages. I’m really worried.”

The teen shuffled uncomfortably. “Damn. That sucks.”

Something Tommy had somehow not processed about the apartment last night was that it was situated directly above Niki’s bakery. When she woke up and started to get ready for work, he decided to follow her downstairs. It wasn’t like he had anything better to do. Tommy considered begging for free cookies, ultimately deciding against it. He was going to at least *try* not to be annoying.

He made himself comfortable in a chair near the counter, tapping his hands against the table repeatedly. Puffy apparently had a tendency to sleep in, so she wouldn’t be joining them until later. It was just Tommy and Niki in the bakery.

The place was well maintained, with cheerful and whimsical decor. The walls were painted in a gradient from pastel yellow to pink, and dotted with small lavender clouds. There were five tables with varying numbers of chairs, all seemingly hand-carved. The wood was painted sky blue, with fluffy white seat cushions. Every little detail perfectly fit the name, “Fairytale Bakery.”

He could hear Niki in the bakery’s kitchen humming a gentle tune. The mindless melody brought a bittersweet smile to Tommy’s lips. It- Well, like many things, it reminded him of Wilbur a bit. Not the coward in this world who was fun to mess with, but the big brother figure from home. The man who gave Tommy a name, who taught him how to sing. Who made him a soldier before he’d even hit adulthood. Who tore apart the home Tommy had sacrificed everything for. It was difficult to pin down exactly how he felt about him.

Niki’s humming, and in turn Tommy’s complicated thoughts, were interrupted by the sound of a phone ringing. He reached for his pocket, before remembering that he’d put the device on silent to better ignore the endless worried messages. Trying to convince him that they cared. What, did they think he was completely stupid?

Reaching for a distraction, he chose to eavesdrop on Niki.

“And you’re sure they’re aiming to kill? Like, certain?” Already off to a worrying start there, Niki!

A pause.

“I- I don’t know, Techno. I could ask if Puffy’s heard anything, but this is news to me.”

Damn, Tommy really wished that her phone was on speaker. He would appreciate a crumb of context. Trying to make sense of what he was intentionally overhearing with only half the conversation felt like doing a thousand piece puzzle with no edge pieces. Also, he hated puzzles and would often throw them in lakes just to ruin them. Fuck puzzles.

“*Two?* In the same day? Have you upped security yet?”

Two of what, Niki. Please share with the class. Incredibly cruel to just leave Tommy in suspense like this. Everyone knows it's just good manners to over-explain everything you say, just in case someone is trying to eavesdrop. Common courtesy.

“That’s good. Stay safe, okay?”

Another pause.

Niki laughed. “Yeah, yeah. I know. ‘Technoblade never dies.’ You better uphold that saying, or I will be very angry with you.”

She said a friendly goodbye, and now Tommy had nothing to keep himself busy. Unfair, honestly. What was he expected to do, come up with something? In *this* economy? Yeah, right. An example of unrealistic expectations for men.

He grabbed his phone, intending on terrorizing Wilbur some more. Yes, this was a legitimate hobby. Some people actually did it professionally! Given that Wilbur was employed as a hero those people would be called “villains,” but still.

He blinked when he noticed a text that *wasn't* from one of the three adults who had kidnapped/adopted him and then promptly broken his trust.

It was Purpled. They were... friends, right? Glancing down, Purpled wasn't even asking for his location. It was pretty likely that Quackity hadn't put him up to this. Purpled wasn't the kind of guy to listen to his boss, anyways. After a few moments of careful deliberation, Tommy decided to reply.

Purpled

Purpled: u good?

Tommy: i am in misrery

Purpled: rip.

Tommy: thianks fr the suopprt

Purpled: oh. do you want to like

Purpled: talk about it or something?

Tommy: qukakity is a traiotr bitch

Purpled: i can stab him for you?

Tommy: jsut a littke

Purpled: got it!

He smiled. Even if he didn't have Sapnap or Karl or Quackity, he still had at least one friend. That was enough for him.

Chapter End Notes

Hint for theorists: The villain team "The Winged Alliance" are referred to as such because all of them have stylized wing designs on the back of their capes. It is also NOT what they call themselves <3

Tommy Translation Time!

Tommy: how the fuck does tv works??

Tommy: drugs are easy

Tommy: you should go back to being dead

Tommy: i am in misery

^^^ (If you caught what lovely little audio clip I was referencing here... I am Not sorry! <3)

Tommy: thanks for the support

Tommy: quackity is a traitor bitch

Tommy: just a little

Sweet Treats and Stab Wounds

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Time ticked by slowly, with the sky gradually brightening. The entire room was permeated by the sweet smell of vanilla and various fruits that traveled from the kitchen. Niki had been occasionally bringing finished confections to the front of the bakery to place within a glass display counter. Even though she was clearly busy, she would spare a few moments to chat with Tommy each time. She was every bit the ray of sunshine that he remembered from the early days of L'manberg. Prime, he didn't realize just how much he'd missed her.

In the gaps between his interactions with Niki, he continued to chat with Purpled over text. It was comfortable, giving him some semblance of the strange normalcy he's built during his first week in this world. Many people saw Tommy as chaotic, reveling in disorder, but that was just not true. Perhaps it had been once, when he was younger and more full of life, but not anymore. Now, he preferred to have some sort of schedule. It was so much easier when he could just drift through life, following a routine. When he didn't have to *think*.

At some point, about eight-thirty according to his phone's built-in clock, Niki realized that Tommy hadn't eaten yet. She was oddly upset about it, the shine in her eyes showing gentle concern. Tommy tried to protest that he was fine, not wanting to bother her. With a small shake of her head, she turned on her heel and returned to the kitchen. He thought that was the end of that conversation, but... apparently not.

She returned a couple seconds later, placing a small pink plate holding... something... onto the table Tommy was seated at. "Eat. You're too thin."

"I'm fi-" Tommy started, but was cut off with a sharp glare.

Niki was a lot like a foxglove flower. For all she appeared delicate and innocent, she could be downright deadly. She was a gentle and kind person by nature, but that didn't change that she could be scary when she wanted to. A woman of many talents. Niki was always a lot stronger than people gave her credit for.

While the look she gave him was enough to get Tommy to shut his mouth, he wasn't really afraid. He was good at reading people, a skill he'd had to develop to survive. He could tell that she wasn't actually angry with him, and the glare was more playful than anything. She had no reason to hate him.

The pastry, as she informed him, was a cinnamon roll. She looked shell-shocked when he'd asked what cinnamon was, but to her credit had still answered the question. Tommy, of course, inspected the treat carefully before tasting it. He'd been made to eat poisoned food before (Dream was an absolute bastard) and could confidently say he hated it. Not that Tommy believed Niki would try to do that, but it never hurt to be cautious. He finally bit into the confection and-

It took him several moments to regain his bearings. He didn't have the words to describe it. It was so *good*. Good was a massive understatement, but it was the first thing that came to mind. The cinnamon roll was easily the best thing he had ever eaten. It wasn't just the flavor, either. The small smile on Niki's lips and the knowing glint in her eyes as she wowed Tommy with an expertly made dessert. That spark of brightness that hadn't faded from her, here. It was so familiar, suffocating him with nostalgia.

Prime, what Tommy wouldn't give to go back to before. Before wars, and exiles, and deaths. Back to freely given smiles, carefree laughter, the sound of Wilbur gently strumming his guitar. To healthy grass, blue skies that barely smelled of smoke, flower crowns braided by clumsy fingers, and time passing too fast under the golden sun. Moments of joy he wished he could properly cherish blurred together in a haze of "the good days." Back when he was a kid. Was allowed to *be* a kid.

He took a deep breath. It was just a pastry, one he'd received because he needed food to survive. It wasn't that deep. He needed to stop overthinking things like that, getting lost in his own head. He continued eating. Glancing up, he noticed that Niki had returned to the kitchen. He was glad, hopefully she hadn't noticed him overreacting like that to a dessert.

At some point, around half an hour later, Niki flipped around a cute painted wooden sign to indicate that the bakery was open. Within a few minutes, customers began trickling in. The place seemed to be fairly popular, if the number of patrons so early was anything to go off of. It would be more surprising if it wasn't successful, really. Niki was the most talented baker he had ever met. It made sense that something like that would remain the same even in such a drastically different world.

The bakery continued to get busier as time went on, and being in close quarters with so many people made anxiety buzz in his chest. Claustrophobia combined with his instinctual wariness of others worked together to make sure Tommy had a bad time. He'd thought he would've gotten used to this, working at the Golden Goose, but apparently not. Then again, at the casino, he'd had Purpled to talk to. A convenient distraction. He hadn't realized how comforting the other teen's presence was until he had to be without it. He would talk to Niki, but she was clearly busy handling customers and he didn't want to be a distraction.

Seconds seemed to drag on for hours as Tommy sat at a table in the corner, trying to ignore the uncomfortable prickling feeling of eyes on him. Rationally he knew that nobody in the building had any reason to be staring, but... the persistent unease from being surrounded by strangers made his paranoia flare. Anyone could be observing him right now, searching for a weakness to exploit. Tommy very well knew that he had too many of those. His hand twitched for a weapon, but he knew drawing his sword was just likely to draw unwanted attention. He wouldn't inconvenience Niki by causing a scene.

"Tommy? Are you okay?"

He turned, and relaxed minutely when he took note of who was speaking. Captain Puffy, his favorite woman. Every woman was his favorite, but her especially. She looked worried, and he followed her gaze to notice his hands which were squeezing the edge of the table in a white knuckled grip. Realizing this, he let go and tried to ignore the small tremors running through the extremities.

“Just fine, big P.” He responded with a forced smile.

She raised an eyebrow skeptically, but kindly didn’t push the topic. He was grateful for that. Even if he knew not to let himself trust her, he couldn’t deny that she was just a great person. Just having her there made him breathe a bit easier, and the humming background noise of several people chattering became less overwhelming now that he wasn’t alone.

“Alright, if you’re sure. You can let me know if you need anything.”

He nodded in agreement, despite the fact he knew he would not be doing that. He could tell from her face that she knew it too. Asking for help was hard enough when it was someone he trusted, but for a person he was trying to keep at arm's length? Completely out of the question. He wouldn’t let his guard down, and he would *not* get attached. ~~He ignored the voice at the back of his mind that sounded suspiciously like Dream, cooing “Attachments are a weakness.”~~

Being the fantastic woman she was, Puffy mercifully changed the subject. “I got you some new clothes! I figured it can’t be too comfy wearing a suit all the time.”

Tommy smiled at her, relief mixed with excitement and gratitude. She was right about his discomfort, though it was more a result of the symbolism than the garments themselves. He couldn’t fucking wait to put this thing where he wouldn’t have to look at it. The thought of just tossing it out made something painful twist in his gut, which he wouldn’t focus on. He could probably just shove the suit in a closet or something. Problem solved.

Puffy led him upstairs, and he felt significantly lighter once he reached the quiet of the apartment. He hadn’t even been aware of how tightly his jaw had been clenched until he relaxed, wincing slightly at the ache in his teeth. Damn, he had issues. Trauma was not very pog, in Tommy’s humble opinion

The clicking of hooves against hardwood flooring made him look up, and he saw Puffy grinning with her arms full of clothes. She unceremoniously dumped them on the couch, gesturing to the pile dramatically.

“Bam! Clothing! We’ve done it!” The sheep hybrid announced cheerfully.

Her positivity was infectious, and Tommy was unable to resist the grin that tugged at the corners of his mouth. Not that he tried, he wouldn’t want to look like a dick. He rifled through the jumble of multicolored fabric when he saw something that made his breath catch. Staring up at him from the sofa was a soft sweater, made from buttercup yellow yarn. It wasn’t the same, of course. The knit was finer, and there were tiny white flowers embroidered on the hem, collar, and the cuffs of its sleeves. It was different. Still, all he could see was-

A greyscale ghost with a dripping blue slash across his torso, a toothy grin and vacant eyes. Echoing laughter, the cold metal of a compass pressed into scarred hands. The coarse sand digging into Tommy’s skin as he lay on the beach, wondering why even the naive phantom who could only remember joy had left him. The icy chill of terror clashing against boiling air, watching as a promise broke and a dead man was pulled from the grave.

*His brother in all but blood, back and alive and **wrong**. Words of praise for a cruel and sadistic tormenter spilling from his lips without care, ignorant of the deep wounds they carved into Tommy's skin. He knew he was being manipulated again, he could **tell**, but...*

It was so much easier to give in. To play along. He was so used to following Wilbur that it was second nature to comply with orders, working his hands until they were raw after being offhandedly told to gather some stone. The routine of deferring to his older brother was familiar, painful, and unhealthy all at once like putting on his favorite pair of shoes which were now a size and a half too small.

His eyes burned, but he didn't cry. Tommy never cried. He forced himself to take in a big lungful of air, pinching the fabric of the sweater between two fingers. Focusing on the texture of the garment in his hand and the fragrant smell of the flowers in little planters all around the room, he managed to calm himself. It was fine. It was just a sweater. He looked at it again, and-

Ghostbur, who never left of his own volition. Who was always happy to see him. Who didn't get annoyed at him for talking too much. Ghostbur, who loved him.

Wilbur, who found him as a little kid and took him in. Who looked at a dirty street rat and saw something worth caring for. Who taught him to read and write. Wilbur, who, despite everything, still loved him.

Tommy decided to wear the sweater.

Purpled's antenna twitched in irritation as he stood at his post. Ever since... *whatever* had happened between Quackity and Tommy, he'd had to return to his position serving drinks. His boss had assured him that the position was temporary, just until Tommy returned. Based on the text conversations they'd been having, though, it was doubtful that Tommy would be coming back to the Golden Goose any time soon.

Honestly, having to stand in the corner by himself sucked. His legs would get sore from being on his feet all day, and there was nothing to do besides try to eavesdrop on the poker table closest to his station. The job was at least twenty times less boring when he had his friend to talk to. The guy was fucking weird, that was undeniable, but he was good company. One time they'd spent an entire hour discussing the best way to kill a person. Bonding at it's finest.

Purpled wasn't one to make friends easily. A lot of people were either put off by his violent tendencies (like losers) or were just too annoying for him to put up with. While Tommy was loud and abrasive, he was also funny and generally cool to be around. He had a way of drawing out laughs with the absolute stupidest of jokes. Also, he was able to genuinely appreciate things like Purpled's vast knife collection. An important quality in a friend.

Hm, speaking of Tommy and violence. Purpled did have a promise to uphold. His violet eyes darted around, carefully scanning the room before locking onto his target. Standing near the back of the room, discussing something with Charlie, was Quackity. Perfect, he was distracted.

Purpled walked over with long confident strides, his steps completely silent on the plush carpet. He kept to the back wall, letting the vibrant color of his suit blend with the flashing lights from slot machines. After a moment of deliberation, he decided the best place to strike would be Quackity's arm. He tested the sharpness of his chosen weapon against the tip of his finger, deciding it was satisfactory. The cool, smooth plastic was held firm in a confident grip, and he had to suppress a laugh when he stopped for a second to think about what he was about to do. He slammed his hand forward as though throwing a punch, feeling resistance as the sharpened point met flesh.

Quackity jumped as he felt a sharp pain in his left arm, glancing down to notice he'd been impaled by a *fucking* pencil. A small amount of blood stained a patch on the sleeve of his pale dress shirt a brilliant crimson. Based on the noise the makeshift weapon created on impact, some of the graphite must have broken off inside his arm. It took him less than a second to determine the culprit, when Purpled was stood directly behind him with a grin full of sharpened teeth. Wincing, Quackity looked back at his arm. He was visibly buffering for several moments, before asking:

"What the *fuck*?"

The teen shrugged. "Tommy said to stab you, but only a little."

"Why a penc- Wait, Tommy? You've talked to him!?" Hope shone in the man's eyes. "Do- do you know where he is?"

"Nope! Anyways, back to work. Have a nice day or whatever." Purpled gave a small wave and walked back to his post, leaving an incredibly baffled (and still impaled) Quackity in his wake.

The next few hours were boring. Well, no. That wasn't quite right. They were uneventful, but in a peaceful way. Like the still air in a warm and homely cabin. He made idle chatter with Puffy, mostly allowing her to talk about her life while he gave the occasional remark to indicate he was listening. Tommy wasn't too keen on sharing about himself at the moment, and he could tell she was being conscious to respect that. It was almost strange, how someone so loud, bright, and lively like her could have such a comforting presence. She was energetic, but in a way that felt safe. As though he were able to be a child again, if only for a few moments. Not that he would, of course. Tommy Innit was a large man.

He hadn't truly realized how stressed he'd been earlier until he got the chance to relax, listening to Puffy talk about tripping and accidentally smashing several bottles of beer at the grocery store (oof.) While the bakery was charming and had a lovely atmosphere, he really preferred the place while it was empty. Curled up on the couch, wearing the yellow sweater and a pair of gray sweats, he could just *be*. There was no need to stay alert, monitoring his surroundings for possible threats.

It seemed like only minutes had passed, but a glance at the sliver of sky visible between the curtains showed that it was already dark outside. Puffy followed his gaze, giving a comment on how late it had gotten. He nodded in wordless agreement, though he was mostly consumed by his thoughts. Tommy had been enjoying himself, he realized. Lost himself in

the pleasant and entertaining conversation as time just slipped by. He wanted to internally curse himself for getting too comfortable, but couldn't bring himself to be upset. Maybe he was allowed to have nice things sometimes. Never for long, of course, but that didn't mean it wasn't worth enjoying the moments of happiness he could find.

"The bakery's probably closed by now." Puffy remarked after glancing at her phone, presumably to check the time. "You could go see if Niki needs help cleaning up? Only if you want to, of course! That's not- It's okay if you just wanna stay up here."

He *had* just been thinking about taking the chance to be happy when he could, and spending time with Niki could be fun. Maybe she'd have something he could eat, too. He was not over that cinnamon roll, it had been fucking epic. S tier food. He gave a quick goodbye to Puffy before heading down the stairs leading to the bakery's back room.

The stairs themselves were *weird*. Rather than just using stairs, it was like someone had made slabs but set them far enough apart to leave small gaps between them, but with enough overhang that it wasn't really a tripping hazard. He didn't really see the point of having it made like this. A decorative feature, maybe? He didn't think it really added anything in terms of aesthetic, but then again Tommy was no builder.

He eventually finished his descent, reaching the small gray room right behind the kitchen. As far as he could tell, the room's only purpose was to serve as a connection between the bakery and the apartment. He shoved open the blue metal door, (since when could iron doors be opened by hand? This world was fucking weird.) and was immediately hit by the strong scent of cocoa.

Attention drawn by the creaking of the door hinges, Niki greeted him with a friendly smile and a small wave. There was a soft mint colored bandana tied around her head, keeping the hair from her face as she worked. It reminded Tommy of his own bandana, the one he'd gotten from Tubbo. It was still safely stored in his ender chest, where he'd placed it the moment he learned of Dream's escape. It wasn't something he was willing to lose. He missed the comforting feel of the tattered green fabric against his neck. He should try to get another ender chest soon.

Despite what Puffy had said, Niki didn't seem like she was cleaning up. In fact, quite the opposite once he took notice of the steady heat still coming from one of the large ovens. Not to mention the ingredients set in a neat row on one counter, beside a few bowls and spoons of varying sizes. If he had to take a wild guess, he'd say that she was in fact doing *more* baking. Good for her!

The silence was starting to bother him, so he said the first thing that came to mind. "'Ow do?'"

"Oh, I'm good! I was just going to make some cookies for you. As a little gift."

Something warm bloomed in Tommy's chest at that, and he had to remind himself that he was trying not to let himself care about her too much, for his own safety. It was so hard to protect himself when there was nothing he wanted more than to embrace the feeling of

something resembling family. She was being so *kind*, and it scared him a bit. He just didn't want to be hurt.

"Oh- uh- Poggers." He choked out, trying very hard to keep the emotion from his voice.

She paused for a moment, a look of consideration on her face. "Do you know how to bake, Tommy?"

He shook his head. On a list of his many skills, anything food related was like George. It was not found. As a kid he'd mostly subsisted off of fruits and bread hastily crafted from ill-gotten wheat. Wilbur, who took him in and practically raised him, was a disaster that could not be trusted within twenty blocks of a kitchen. Furnace cooked steaks and pork chops were still an improvement to Tommy, though. After moving to the Dream SMP, nobody had the time or energy to actually prepare meals. Needless to say Tommy had never had a chance to figure out cooking, let alone baking which was much more complicated and precise.

"Cookies are pretty simple. Would you like to learn?"

He didn't even think before answering. "Oh, fuck yeah!"

She beamed, and started to walk him through the process of making cookie dough. Apparently the wet ingredients and also sugar went together first, for reasons that were beyond Tommy. He diligently measured out the sugar and butter, but hesitated when she asked him to crack a couple eggs into a bowl.

"What do I do if a chicken comes out?"

Niki blinked. "I- you don't have to worry about that. The eggs aren't fertilized, and they've been kept cold enough that a chicken couldn't grow in them either way." She explained patiently.

...Grow inside them? Did chickens do that? If so, they must grow pretty fucking quick considering Tommy had seen people throw freshly laid eggs and get baby chickens out. He couldn't help the confusion written plainly across his face. What she'd just told him made no sense.

"Don't all eggs have a random chance of popping out chickens when you break them?"

"No?" Niki seemed to be equally confused.

She was the expert here, so Tommy deferred to her judgment and didn't question it further. Tapping the shell against the edge of the bowl a couple times like she had told him to, he cracked the first egg without incident. She showed him how to separate the yolk from the whites, which he managed to do on the first try. The next egg, however, was a different story. Something incredibly rare happened the second that shell broke. Four fluffy baby chickens exploded outwards, landing messily in the bowl of egg white and successfully covering themselves in the slimy substance.

Carefully scooping up the chicks in his hand, he turned his head towards the baker. “Niki,” he started slowly, “it appears I have given birth.”

“That- that’s- that is *not* how eggs work.” She replied weakly, looking seconds away from a mental breakdown.

He shoved the tiny animals into her hands. “Hold my new sons, you’ll feel better.”

“*How?*”

Tommy pointed to the smallest of the clutch, which had ashy gray down unlike it’s yellow siblings. “This one is going to be named #000000. Hetta for short.”

Niki nodded absently, still visibly struggling to process the chickens. He didn’t know what part of this she didn’t understand, but decided to let her have her moment. She’d figure it out eventually. In the meantime, he could name his other three sons. Names are an important thing. They don’t necessarily define someone, but they *can* shape how others perceive them. This was a process to take seriously.

“Hmm... Could call this mean one Cock... ‘s like a pun. Yeah.”

...Very seriously.

“Please don’t name it that?” Niki, who had somewhat regained her composure, asked with a pained expression.

“No no no, but consider: It’s funny.”

She laughed softly. “I mean... can’t argue with that. Can I please name one of the chickens?”

He considered the request carefully. To allow Niki to name one of his precious and beloved children. Could she be trusted with something so special? So meaningful? He took a moment to study her thoughtfully. Much like the baked goods she excelled at making, Niki was incredibly sweet. She was also a woman, which made her a genius by default. Tommy nodded sharply. Yeah, he thought she could handle this responsibility. Plus, if she failed, he could just secretly call the chicken by a different name when she wasn’t looking.

She gently pet the head of the fluffiest chick. “We could call this one Momo.”

An odd name, one Tommy didn’t know the reason for, but he wouldn’t question her. Besides, at least it wasn’t horrible. Not as fantastic as Cock or #000000, but fine enough. He nodded to show his approval.

He pointed to the remaining bird “The Unnamed One.” He declared in a strange voice.

Niki glanced up at him. “What are you going to name it?”

“No, that’s the name. The Unnamed One.”

“...Okay, then!” She laughed softly.

The pair didn't actually end up making cookies, but somehow Tommy didn't mind. It was nice just to talk with Niki for a bit. He could hardly remember the last time he was able to just have fun. To joke around with someone without the heavy burden of a bloody shared past hanging over them. ~~He didn't count the week with Quackity and his boyfriends. He didn't want to think about them right now, not when he was actually feeling happy for a moment.~~

"Tubbo, I'm serious. Get *off*." Ranboo complained, glaring at the boy who was perched on the counter with a mischievous grin.

"Nah, rather not bossman."

"Come on, you'll get me in trouble."

"L." Tubbo replied, expression unchanged.

On one hand, Ranboo enjoyed when Tubbo came to visit him at work. Fundy was good company, sure, but interacting with him could be a little stressful. Especially on days like today. Talking to Tubbo almost always felt easy and natural. On the other hand, however, sometimes the goat hybrid decided he was going to cause problems on purpose.

It wasn't an uncommon occurrence for Tubbo to decide that the ice cream shop's counter was a seat just for him. No matter how many times Ranboo told him it was unsanitary or begged him to stop, he was relentless. He was a bit like a cat, needing to perch on a high surface. Maybe he just wanted to know what being even the slightest bit tall felt like. Not that Ranboo could ever say that to him, seeing as the ender hybrid enjoyed having his kneecaps intact.

Usually at least, Ranboo would be able to pick him up and forcefully move him to the ground. That wasn't exactly an option at the moment, and by the smug smirk on Tubbo's face it was clear he knew it. The end hybrid had been a bit too slow in a scuffle the night before, earning himself a knife in the forearm. The injury was carefully concealed beneath a long sleeve shirt, so as to prevent Fundy from suspecting anything. They were friends, but that didn't mean Ranboo was about to spill his secret identity.

Speaking of Fundy...

"Need a hand with that, Ranboo?" The fox hybrid in question asked with a scheming glint in his eye.

"Uh... sure?"

Fundy's smile widened as he marched over to Tubbo, shoving the short boy off the counter and onto the hard tile floor. He responded to the shouting and indignant curses he received with a grin and cackle. He walked back to his normal place behind the register as though nothing had happened, though the swish of his tail betrayed him.

Tubbo had just come up with an incredibly creative insult about Fundy's father when the tiny silver bell above the door chimed, indicating that they had an actual customer. Ranboo couldn't help but snicker in amusement at the sheer bafflement on the man's face. He

imagined he'd have a similar reaction to walking in on such a scene, were he not someone thoroughly used to both Tubbo and Fundy's antics.

"Oh! Uh- Heyyy Foolish! Nice to see you!" Fundy said, trying and failing to sound casual.

The golden man glanced at Tubbo on the floor, visibly full of rage, and then back up to the awkward fox hybrid. "Am I... interrupting something?"

"You're interrupting Fundy's *fucking* murder--"

"-Not at all! Welcome to Freezy Cold, the only ice cream shop where the name is dumber than the employees!" Fundy cut Tubbo off, perfectly slipping into a customer service voice.

Ranboo struggled to suppress a laugh. "Okay, that is- that is just *not* the greeting we're supposed to give."

The shiny golden shark man shrugged. (Fundy had called him Foolish, right? Ranboo couldn't tell if that was actually his name, or just an insult. Knowing Fundy, it could be either.) He stepped past Tubbo, tilting his head up to read the bold-printed menu above the counter. His emerald colored eyes narrowed, and he made a small "hm" sound.

"Uh, could I get some chocolate in a to-go cup?" He finally decided.

"Boring! Basic!" Tubbo yelled from the floor. Nobody acknowledged it.

Fundy nodded. "What size?"

"Large."

"Ok!" The fox hybrid turned to his right, shouting "ONE LARGE CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM IN A TO-GO CUP!"

Ranboo winced, rubbing his ears. This had to be one of his least favorite bits. Every time Fundy was in register duty, he felt the need to scream out any order despite the fact Ranboo was *literally* right there. Unnecessary and painful. His poor eardrums suffered horribly under these conditions, crying out for the better days when he worked in a library. If only he were still there. The firing had been hardly justified, honestly. Ranboo only ate *one* book!

While Ranboo struggled to locate wherever the cups had been hidden, Fundy made small talk with the customer. "You never order things to go. Who's the ice cream for?"

"Eret has been kind of stressed lately. I'm honestly a bit worried. I was hoping this could help? I mean, ice cream always helps, so." The shark hybrid shrugged again.

"It is much faster and cheaper than therapy." Fundy remarked wisely.

It was only after the guy had received his ice cream, paid, and left that the realization struck Ranboo. "Wait, you just know a guy who's *friends with the mayor!*?"

"I've got connections!" The fox stated proudly.

“Hey, can someone help me off the fucking floor?”

Ranboo looked down at him, forcibly keeping a straight face. “This is what you get for sitting on the counter again. Face the consequences and suffer.”

Tubbo pouted. “Nooo, but I’m just a little guy! And it’s my birthday! I’m a little birthday boy! You wouldn’t do this to a little birthday boy, would you? For shame!”

Ranboo and Tubbo had been best friends for ten years. They shared an apartment. They knew each other better than anyone else. Ranboo knew with full confidence that it was absolutely *not* Tubbo’s birthday. It wasn’t even *close*. The ridiculousness of the entire tirade was almost difficult for Ranboo to process, but he’d never be so naive as to expect anything else from his most chaotic friend.

“Tubbo, you are a menace to society.”

Tommy was an odd kid, but impossibly endearing. If Niki was already looking into the adoption process, then that was her business. She was more than certain Puffy would agree. Despite the heaviness of his gaze that spoke of untold pain, he still managed to shine. He possessed a certain charm that made her want to protect him at all costs. Sort of like a small animal, though she doubted he’d appreciate the comparison.

There was also that nagging sense of familiarity brought by his speech pattern, but Niki had no idea when she could’ve met him before. Tommy didn’t exactly seem like the sort of person one could forget. His personality was something loud and unapologetic, distinct as a splash of neon paint against a white canvas.

Niki hoped that he would stay with them for a while. Even in the short time they’d spent together, she could tell he’d add a lot of life to the household. Not that Puffy wasn’t already an agent of chaos on her own, but it would still be fun to have Tommy around. Honestly, she’d never really considered parenting until she met him.

Obviously she wasn’t going to try and adopt a kid she had met only a day ago, that would just be ridiculous. Still, it was a nice idea for some point in the future, once they’d actually gotten to know each other. Something so important shouldn’t be rushed.

On the subject of Tommy, her mind couldn’t help but wander back to when they were baking. As someone who had graduated middle school biology, she knew very well that eggs didn’t work like that in the slightest. Even if the egg contained a fully developed chick ready for hatching that had somehow survived refrigeration, there would only have been one. It was physically impossible for two chicks that size to have come from the same egg, let alone four. Trying to understand the physics of that gave her a headache.

Tommy, on the other hand, hadn’t so much as blinked. Based on what he’s said only moments before the incident, he fully believed that chickens could just pop out of any egg fully formed. Based on random chance. Had he never gone to school? More importantly, how the *hell* did those chickens appear.

...Niki had a theory. While it may be a bit far-fetched, she thought that Tommy might have some sort of reality alteration power that functioned by altering things to fit what he believed to be true. If he genuinely thought that was how eggs work, and he had a power like that, it would explain what physics couldn't.

It could also potentially explain the horrible state he was in. Someone so young should never have that many scars. Even *Techno* had fewer, and he was constantly battling villains and criminals as a career. Considering he'd been found trembling in an alleyway, it wasn't too much of a leap of logic to think someone may have used Tommy for his power. As horrible as that was, it wasn't unrealistic. Reality warpers were powerful and incredibly rare.

Niki debated whether or not to ask Tommy about this directly, ultimately deciding it was a bad idea. If he indeed had been held captive because of his power, bringing it up would probably scare him off. The last thing she wanted was to make him feel unsafe. From the way he held himself, it was obvious that he was already cautious. She couldn't blame him. Even if her theories were wrong, it was painfully obvious that *something* terrible had happened to him.

With a frown, she suddenly realized that they hadn't actually baked those cookies. While magical chickens were certainly a valid reason to be distracted, she still wanted to give them to Tommy as a gesture of kindness. He certainly deserved it. Plus, what better way was there to bond with someone than giving them sweets? Once again she was drawn back to the metaphor of Tommy being a small animal. She really was just giving him food to warn his trust, huh? In Niki's defense, it had worked with Techno.

She quietly headed back downstairs to the bakery, turning the oven to 375 degrees to preheat. Niki went through the steps of making the cookie dough thoughtlessly, all the measurements long since memorized. It wasn't exactly the most complicated of recipes. Glancing at the heart-shaped clock in the corner of the kitchen, she noticed it seemed to have gotten late when she wasn't looking.

It was already a bit past ten. She wondered if Puffy would be going out tonight. The thought reminded her that she still had to ask Puffy if she knew anything about those assassinations Techno had mentioned. While Niki was certain she wasn't involved, hopefully she'd have some helpful information. It'd be best for everyone if whatever that was got resolved quickly.

The cookies were finished, and it was nearly 11 PM. She put them on a rack to cool for a couple minutes, leaning against a wall and tapping her fingers idly against the counter. Tomorrow was a Tuesday. She'd have to wake up early to run the bakery. Honestly, Niki was starting to regret the fact she hadn't tried harder to find someone to help out. While she knew Puffy would happily do it if she asked, Niki also knew that her girlfriend was a naturally late riser. She'd *hate* having to wake up early.

Niki yawned. Part of her regretted staying up so late, but it'd be worth it if Tommy liked the cookies. She really hoped he did. Niki hadn't missed the way his entire face lit up when he first tasted a cinnamon roll. Tommy looked so much more like the kid he was in that moment. It was like he'd never had dessert before. He hadn't even known what a cinnamon roll was. God, she really wished she could fix whatever messed up life that kid had lived. He deserved better.

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully this was worth the wait,,, Longest chapter I've ever written for *anything*.

Also! I am Once Again plugging my discord server. Join us.

<https://discord.gg/ChgjS8GMDR>

Call a color

Chapter Notes

HI I'M NOT DEAD!

So sorry for going this long without an update. Long story short I'm in a Lot of pain and very tired. I wanted this chapter to be longer but here we are! I hope you guys like it.

Fun fact: I can't even emote with my face because that Hurts. :) ! I will talk more on this in the end notes

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A few days, perhaps four or five, had passed. He was still in the apartment with Niki and Puffy. ~~Still waiting for the other shoe to drop.~~ His stay thus far had been uneventful. In direct opposition to his time with Quackity and his boyfriends, (*-Don't think about them too hard. Nasty feelings can be dealt with later-*) when it seemed like something wacky happened every other moment, Tommy's time here had been more peaceful. Calmer. It was difficult to say which he liked better.

While he'd certainly been one for chaotic hijinks when he was younger and more naive, he might even venture to say he preferred the calm. After a life of constant running and fighting, Tommy would appreciate the chances he got to rest. As few and far between as those tended to be.

That didn't change the ache in his chest that longed for the past. Memories of pulling pranks with Fundy or scamming people with Wilbur blurred together with moments bullying alternate Sapnap or joking with this world's Quackity. A wistful longing for the feeling of lighthearted fun, of being allowed to be himself with no worry of disastrous repercussions.

He'd never be able to return to the days before L'manberg, when everything was all fun and games.

He *could* go back to Quackity and his boyfriends. To a house full of laughter and gentle teasing at all hours of the day. To a casino full of too many sounds and colors and bright lights, somehow made bearable by good company. To the feeling of inclusion, of someone genuinely wanting him around.

It was a bad idea, though. Tubbo had always reprimanded Tommy for thinking with his heart before his head. Ignoring logic and reason in favor of his blazing emotions. Because one thing anyone who really *knew* Tommyinnit understood was that he *felt*. He experienced his feelings fully and deeply. Sure, it was easy for people to point out his anger that raged like an unchecked wildfire, but they would ignore his grief that drowned and crushed him with the weight of an ocean. His joy that lit up any room brighter and warmer than the sun itself. His

love that couldn't be measured or weighed by any mortal method. After all, you can never count all the stars in the sky.

Tommy made an impulsive decision. He checked his phone. Opened texts from a contact he'd been avoiding like a charged creeper.

motherfuck

motherfuck: Tommy please

motherfuck: We're worried about you

motherfuck: Please just tell me if you're okay. That's all I ask

motherfuck: Tommy?

There were several more messages from Quackity, all holding a similar level of concern. The same pleading tone. Tommy felt- well, he sure *felt*. Guilty? Afraid? Sad? Touched? Too many emotions to name, leaving him confused and pained. He turned off the phone, unable to handle reading anything more. Quietly, he huffed a laugh at the contact name. It was so much easier to focus on a dumb joke he'd made a week or so so than on the conflicting instincts, begging him to run towards Quackity while simultaneously insisting that he instead hide away to protect himself.

Logic. It was logical Tommy time. His stupid lonely little heart could go fuck itself. No making mistakes on a whim just because he wants to pretend that he's loved. Absolutely not. They had been talking to Dream. Willingly and happily. It didn't matter if this was an alternate universe, an alternate guy, that was still *Dream*.

Dream. A risk Tommy would not take. *Could* not. Because if something like exi- *Don't think about it don't think about it don't think about it*- If something like *that* ever happened again, Tommy wouldn't be able to take it. There was only so much a single person could handle. Could survive.

Fuck, Tommy needed a distraction. He didn't want to think about this any more. Even if he was aware that ignoring his emotions wouldn't help anything, he could ignore that fact too. Whoever said "ignorance is bliss" was very correct. He will simply pretend he cannot see his problems, and they no longer exist. Magic. Tommy is just doing a silly little magic trick to make his trauma disappear!

It was around noon, so Niki was still behind the counter in the bakery. Apparently she'd been considering hiring someone else to do that for a while, but never got around to it. Tommy wanted to offer to help, ~~as a way to prove he was worth keeping around~~ as a way to repay her for letting him stay in her home. He really did want to be useful.

...But, the thought of going down to that crowded bakery made his skin crawl. He wasn't used to being on a server with so many people. Not to mention the anxiety of being unarmed and unarmored in front of complete *strangers*. He felt weak for it, and something that reminded him of Dream hissed in his mind that he was being selfish. Refusing to help out for his own comfort.

...Puffy (the one from the DSMP) would tell him it wasn't selfish. She'd say something about trauma and anxiety and putting his own needs first. Tommy had never been good at that. He was trying though, and that was what really mattered. He reminded himself that it was okay if he wasn't able to help out in the bakery. He could find something else to show he was grateful they let him stay in their home.

Speaking of Puffy, maybe he could spend time with her. Tommy didn't really enjoy being alone with his thoughts. He'd had more than enough of that in logsted. Plus, she was fun to hang out with. Bright and energetic, but still careful to respect his boundaries. Truly the best person of all time.

He glanced at his phone again, noting it was around noon. She would probably be waking up soon. Once she'd had a bit to get ready, he'd ask her if she wanted to hang out. Honestly, her sleep schedule was a bit odd to him. The Puffy he knew was more of an early riser, but this world's version was the opposite. He wondered what other things were different about the two.

This world really was quite different from his own. It wasn't the large changes that hit the hardest. Sure, the gigantic city, the technology, the life system and the powers were all a big change. But what was most jarring was the little things. The way Puffy's horns were a shade too light. How Wilbur lacked the crooked nose he'd had since improperly setting it after a tree climbing accident. The lack of calluses on Niki's hands that were gained through mining and fighting with a sword. Tiny things that really hammered in the fact that Tommy was somewhere new. ~~Somewhere he didn't belong.~~

No no no. This wasn't sad boy hours. He refused to sit here and pout like a little bitch boy. He was going to do big man shit. Like crimes, maybe. Crimes are always good. Until a silly little drug van leads to war and death. Until you accidentally burn down a house and-

Fuck. Tommy buried his head in his hands and let out an irritated groan. He wasn't doing a great job at avoiding sad boy hours. This is why he had wanted to hang out with Puffy. Nothing better than a good ol' distraction to keep the bad thoughts away! Except she wasn't awake yet, and probably wouldn't want him bothering her the second she got up. He needed a new plan.

He wished that those chickens were still around. Tommy had always loved animals. Unfortunately, Niki had said something about not having the space to properly care for them. He didn't quite understand it, but wasn't going to take his chances by questioning her. Apparently she had given them to a friend who liked raising animals. Tommy really hoped they were happy.

Thinking about those chickens made him reminisce about his other pets. Henry, the sweet bull who'd always been there to play with Tommy when Tubbo was off somewhere and Wilbur was busy. Mushroom Henry, who was there for him when he was at his lowest. Until Dream had- no, don't think about that. Move on. Shroud, his absolute beloved. Prime, he missed Shroud. His comforting clicks and chitters that always managed to make Tommy smile. He really hoped Shroud was okay. He was a spider, more than capable of taking care of himself for a bit. Unless Dream...

Ah, he'd arrived here again. Sad boy hours. They were impossible to escape. Tommy shouldn't be surprised, considering that he was in fact an incredibly sad boy. Or, no. Not sad boy. He was a big man. A very sad and depressed one, but large nonetheless. That's what really matters at the end of the day! Three cheers for big man Tommyinnit. He has so many wives, and even more traumas! Isn't that so fun and quirky of him?

What was it Wilbur used to say? Something he'd both said and demonstrated (whether intentionally or not) in Pogtopia. 'Misery loves company.' Well, Tommy certainly was feeling miserable. While he wouldn't be like Wilbur and lash out, dragging others down, he still would like some company. Puffy was still asleep. Quackity -as much as it pained him- couldn't be trusted.

So Tommy decided to talk to Purpled.

Purpled

Tommy: hey bitch

Purpled: tommy? sending me a message with no typos?

Purpled: the world must be ending. how tragic.

Tommy: fuck you im trying hard to type rifbt now even thougj my habds are shaking

Purpled: oh shit

Purpled: are you. like. ok?

Tommy: the fjck do you thinbk

Purpled: fair.

Tommy took a deep breath. How honest did he want to be with Purpled right now? That was a difficult question to answer. They'd texted pretty frequently the last couple of days. Tommy felt like the other was someone he could actually consider a friend. He didn't even have to worry about the nagging doubt that his judgment was being clouded by a bond from his previous world, since sed bond never really existed.

Still, it was hard to fight the instinct to keep his cards close to his chest. The voice in his mind that felt like Dream, or maybe Wilbur, hissing not to reveal any vulnerability that could be used against him. Show no weakness, for he could someday become your enemy. That guardedness, while it might protect him, was a horrible way to live. What's the point of surviving if you're forced to do so alone?

Maybe that sentiment could also be applied to Niki and Puffy. Maybe he could trust them. Not now, of course. Quackity had taught him a valuable lesson about not letting himself believe in promises of safety so quickly. But someday. If they kept him around that long, maybe someday he'd be able to extend that fragile trust. To show them his heart, with all its poorly sealed fractures from the many times he'd been betrayed. Fuck, Tommy was so tired of being hurt.

Tommy: im sad

Tommy: been thinking too much about bad shit

Purpled: oh.

Purpled: you wanna... call or something?

Tommy: sure

Only a few seconds passed before his phone started vibrating in his hands, quickly followed by a melodic ringtone. He hesitated for a moment, making sure his breaths were steady before tapping the green button. Immediately, he heard Purpled's voice filter through the device. It was a bit off, but not as distorted or staticky as a call over a communicator would be.

"Uh... hi. It's been a while since we actually talked, huh?"

He laughed. "Yeah, it has been. Sorry for leaving you to steal on your own."

"Won't deny I miss having my own seemingly infinite storage system on hand." Purpled joked, and Tommy was grateful for the lighthearted banter.

"Is that all I am to you? Prick."

"I mean- uh- how tragic to have lost such a valued friend." It was said sarcastically, but the smile in his voice was audible even over the phone.

"Yeah, that's what I fuckin' thought."

Purpled didn't try to make Tommy talk about his problems. Didn't even bring it up. He was incredibly grateful for that. They both talked about whatever random thing came to mind, filling the air with comforting meaningless chatter.

At one point Purpled went on a long rant about astronomy, embarrassment coloring his tone when he realized he'd spent nearly forty minutes rambling. Tommy just assured him that it had been nice. He liked the stars too. Even if it wasn't said, both teens felt something shift in their dynamic after that moment. Things felt more comfortable, the way they are with a close friend rather than a passing acquaintance.

He really could consider Purpled a friend.

Tommy: fuck you im trying hard to type right now even though my hands are shaking

Tommy: the fuck do you think

Thank you guys so much for being patient! As a reward for this I'm giving you guys a bit of information!

Aside from karlnapity and Puffychu, there will be Another who wishes to adopt Tommy. Please give me your theories, if you get it right you get a gold star!

Now, for anyone wondering,,,

Why it's taken me so long to update:

Hi yes I'm suffering a lot! So here's what's up. I've started my school year two weeks ago. You may be asking "smallest, why the fuck are you starting your school year literally after WINTER BREAK?"

Excellent question! The school decided not to enroll me this year, for no reason, and it took them OVER A SEMESTER to fix it!

So I've started my new school year. I can handle this. Sure I've got homework, but I can manage!

Except.

The only way I can get to class.

Is a TWO AND A HALF MILE TRIP. On my *Motorized Skateboard*

Here's some fun facts about electric skateboards!

- it makes you super sore if use them, because of the stiff standing position you have to maintain to keep your balance
- they go very fast
- legally, you have to be on a bike path while riding them
- bike paths tend to have small potholes. These are not an issue for bicycle riders unless they are moving ridiculously slow.
- Skateboard wheels are much smaller than bike wheels, and will ABSOLUTELY get caught in potholes and throw you off the board
- electric skateboard are VERY BAD at stopping!
- using the breaks suddenly while you are on the board has a 90% chance of throwing you off!
- concrete is unforgiving and WILL do damage to your glasses when your skateboard decides to make you fall on your face

So. In conclusions I'm in a LOT of pain. My face is so badly scraped up I cannot eat without Ouch. Oh, and the lense of my glasses got scraped on the asphalt, so now there's

just a big blurry spot in my vision. I can NOT see well enough to type without glassss.
This whole experience has been fuuuun :))))

Sorry again about the late update! Hope you all have a great day!

My little woof woof, heart emoji

Chapter Notes

COME GET YOUR JUICE. Also I have a survey at the end where you can vote for the new fic I will be starting! Please vote on that thank you!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

He didn't really notice time passing, but the call with Purpled must've lasted at least a couple hours. At some point while they were talking, he registered Puffy passing him to head to the kitchen. (He may have been distracted, but that didn't mean he could afford to lose awareness of his surroundings.) The longer the conversation went on, the less he felt he had to put on a facade of his old personality. He was able to fall into the banter more easily, the laughter more genuine than it had been since. Well. *Running, fear and adrenaline coursing through his veins in equal measure. Cursing himself for not expecting the betrayal. For being so easy to give over his trust.*

Though he'd been in a horrible state of mind when he texted Purpled, he found talking to someone helped. Puffy was right about that. It didn't matter that he carefully avoided all heavy topics, the feeling of comradery was enough to lift his spirits. Reflecting back on that last thought, he winced upon realizing how much he sounded like Wilbur. *We really are like brothers.* He chuckled internally at the thought. It wasn't hard to ignore the accompanying pang of homesickness when he still had Purpled cracking jokes about crime in his ear.

Eventually, Purpled stated that he had to get back to work "Before Quackity starts bitching at me." The way he ended the call with "talk soon" did a lot to ease Tommy's faint anxiety, even if it wasn't intentional. What can he say, getting used to being left behind can leave a guy with issues. Unfortunate, that. At least he was a big enough man to admit he had problems. Unlike about ninety percent of the people he knew. Maybe if they all got therapy and chilled the fuck out, none of this bullshit would've happened in the first place.

Puffy finally emerged from the kitchen, plopping down on the couch with a weird circle thing that had squares in it and a cup of what Tommy recognized as coffee. She was still wearing pajamas, and the fog in her eyes and disorderly state of her fluffy white hair showed that she'd just woken up. She seemed disproportionately tired for what time she'd gone to bed, but then again Tommy could say the same for himself. He wondered if she also had trouble sleeping. Tommy hoped not. Puffy was a fantastic woman and did not deserve to have to deal with cringe things like nightmares and insomnia.

It was quiet. Tommy had never been one for the quiet. It was probably more obvious when he was younger. He would parade around, loudly expressing every little thought that popped into his head just to fill the air. He had conflicted feelings on it, now. As much as he still

despised the quiet, loud noises weren't much better. Shouting reminded him a bit too much of *War-Pogtopia-Withers-Exile-Doomsday-Prison-Dream-*

That wasn't even *mentioning* how he felt when he heard an explosion. Tommy's hatred for creepers was a bit stronger than the average person's. Despite Tommy's (understandable) aversion to loud sounds, the silence still made his skin crawl. *It was always so quiet in Logstedshire. Nothing but the sound of crashing waves. When Dream wasn't there, at least.*

Hey, wait. These were exactly the kind of thoughts he'd done that whole kind-of-opening-up-to-Purpled thing to *avoid!* He thought he killed those stupid motherfuckers! What were they doing, crawling in through his brain-windows and into his home like the many women who constantly pursued him? That's just rude! Absolutely unacceptable. Illegal too, probably. Don't ask Tommy, he still doesn't really know what the laws are.

Yeah, he wasn't going to just put up with this! He would simply start a brand new conversation. Keep himself distracted all the time, and he will be one hundred percent chill. Bash the bad memories with a hammer so they cannot hurt him. This is called "coping."

"So, Puffy."

The sheep hybrid replied with a wordless question, taking another long sip of her coffee. Fucking Prime, did she sleep at all? What, did she stay up all night counting taxes or whatever old people do? Not that Puffy was old. No, Tommy would never insult such a fantastic person. Not even in his mind and as a silly little joke to himself. You didn't see anything, and he cannot be prosecuted for this crime. We as a collective are moving on and agreeing to never mention this again.

It was at this moment he realized that she had prompted him to continue talking, and he'd instead spent at least a minute defending himself in the imaginary court of law that existed only within his own brain. Oops.

"Uh- What's-" Fuck, he forgot what he was going to say. Quick, make something up! "Who's the dumbest person you've ever met?"

"Wilbur." She replied with absolutely no hesitation.

Tommy doubled over cackling. The way she stated it as though it were the simplest fact in the world. With the same tone one might use when saying 'the sky is blue' or 'potions don't stack.' She hadn't even had to think about it before answering. Hm, maybe he and Puffy could make a Wilbur bullying club. He could make t-shirts. They could have salmon to eat at all the meetings. A very normal and reasonable use of their time and resources.

It was at least a minute before he recovered from his laughing fit enough to speak. "I agree!"

"Wait, you know him?" Puffy sounded unreasonably surprised at this.

Tommy blinked. "I- yeah? We're literally in a fuckin' group chat with him?"

"Oh my god." Her eyes widened. "You're the same Tommy from the group chat!?"

...Had she not known? He really assumed she just knew. Apparently he was proven incorrect. Huh. Did this mean Niki was also tragically unaware that she was housing the hilarious genius that managed to get a bunch of sort-of strangers to bully Wilbur for his fishfucking ways? How could he allow her such a miserable existence for even a moment longer? To do so would be cruel, villainous even! Tommy was pretty sure being a villain was a crime in this world. He didn't want to go to the bad criminal boy house (or jail, as some lower beings may call it.)

Puffy was still looking at him. He should probably say something. "...Yup."

Good job Tommy! That was a word! Maybe someday, you'll graduate to full sentences, heart emoji. Precious little man. All grown up. Can count all the way to four! He even knows how to slaughter his enemies in the way that leaves him least open to retaliatory attack! They really do grow so fast.

"Wow, alright then." Her face was the emotional equivalent of a buffering icon.

Tommy's distraction senses were tingling! Time for a smooth and graceful change of topic. "Say, why don't you have any pets? I think you could beat up Sapnap so it can't be that."

"Oh, we've talked about getting a dog but never got ar- wait. I- What does Sapnap have to do with anything?"

"Oh, you know. The vibes. Seems like the kind of guy to kill people's pets unprovoked. Have you ever had someone kill one of your pets? It really fucking sucked when my cow was murdered. I miss him. He was the best cow of all time. Henry my beloved." Tommy rambled, not noticing the growing horror on Puffy's face.

"S- Someone killed your pet? Like on purpose?"

"Well, no. Or- not *Henry*. Mushroom Henry was definitely on purpose though. The people like to psychologically destroy big man Tommyinnit. What can I say, they just can't handle how much I girlboss at them." He punctuated the statement with a winning smile.

"That's *horrible!*" Puffy exclaimed, voice heavy with sadness and concern.

Tommy nodded. "That's what people say when they see me. And I only start girlbossing harder. I do not gaslight gatekeep them though, because I have morals and shit."

Her brows were knitted together, weirdly upset considering what he told her wasn't even *that* bad. "I- Tommy, you shouldn't just brush past that--"

"And yet I already have! I'm the first man to speedrun traumadumping. I should get a medal or something for this."

She sighed, and Tommy momentarily tensed at the expression of blatant disappointment. It wasn't- It wasn't all fake and exaggerated the way Dream would do it. It was fine. This was fine. If Tommy's trauma could stop being a little bitchboy for one minute and let him respond

to situations in an appropriate way, that would be fantastic. He let out a slightly shaky exhale, avoiding eye contact.

Puffy didn't bring up her concerns again.

An hour or so later, Puffy decided to head down and talk to Niki. There was new information that her lovely girlfriend deserved to be privy to. Also, Puffy had a bit of an idea. She hoped Niki would agree that it was a good plan.

The tables at the bakery were mostly occupied, but there wasn't a line. She was grateful for that, as it meant they could hopefully have this conversation uninterrupted. After all, there was plenty to discuss.

She felt a mild relief when Niki was similarly shocked at the revelation that Tommy, the visibly traumatized child currently in their apartment, happened to be the same person as Tommy, the most fantastically weird kid they'd had the pleasure of being in a groupchat with. Reflecting back on it, it made sense. They both felt the tiniest bit dumb for not putting the pieces together earlier.

Niki was *visibly* pissed off when Puffy relayed the information about someone purposely killing at least one of Tommy's pets at some point. Puffy had no doubt that if given the chance, Niki would tear whoever had dared to do such a thing limb from limb. From the way Tommy had talked about it, it sounded like the animal had been killed for the express purpose of hurting him. What kind of monster would do something like that?

Once Niki had calmed a bit, Puffy remembered the final thing she'd planned to bring up. "The conversation with Tommy gave me an idea, I wanted to know your thoughts!"

"...A conversation about murdering a child's pet with malicious intent gave you an idea?"

"Ok- Well, when you say it like that, it sounds like it would be something *bad*!"

Niki just smiled. "Alright then, tell me your idea."

"We should take him to go get a dog as soon as you finish with work!"

Niki nodded gently, seemingly agreeing with it. Her eyebrows furrowed suddenly, and she opened her mouth to speak, but was interrupted by the sound of the bakery's door opening. As Niki attended to the group of customers that had just entered, Puffy tried to deduce what about the idea Niki had found a flaw in. It was quite simple, really. Sad kid? Give him a dog! Plus, hopefully such a gesture would show Tommy that he was welcome here as long as he wanted to stay.

Niki handed the customers a couple boxes of pastries along with their change, finally shifting her focus back to Puffy. "Are there even any good places to get dogs that late? Like, wouldn't it be better to go to a shelter?"

"Oh! I actually looked into it. Um, I found a good place, but the reviews are... mixed."

Niki didn't look convinced. "Shouldn't we avoid an adoption place with mixed reviews? Sounds like a- um, what's it called. Bad sign."

"Red flag?"

"Yes, that! Isn't it a red flag?"

"Well, the reviews aren't about the place itself. Or the dogs. Um, apparently it's got some weird employees?"

"Weird like how?"

Puffy thought back to the reviews she'd read, struggling to come up with a concise summary for the negatives. The place had a great reputation, apparently rescuing dogs from shelters and giving them professional behavioral training and rehabilitation to make them more adaptable to new homes. In terms of the animals themselves, people had nothing but praise for the establishment.

But there was also the fact that the employees apparently regularly engaged in physical combat with the people from the pet store next door. Monopoly Menagerie and Dogwarts seemed to have some kind of weird beef with each other. Several people reported Dogwarts' owner to have pulled out an actual battleaxe on multiple occasions. Concerning but... not a dealbreaker according to most. The dogs were really cute, and also very good boys. Tommy deserved a nice dog.

After explaining the situation as best she could, Puffy got Niki to agree with her. They were going to take Tommy to pick out a dog. Hopefully there wouldn't be an axe fight while they were there. Tommy sure looked like he'd dealt with enough fights to last several lifetimes.

Almost as soon as the bakery closed, Tommy was informed that the three of them were going on a little trip. Any attempt to inquire as to their destination was met with some variation of 'It's a surprise!' He was at least 60% sure they weren't going to ditch him somewhere random or kill him and hide the body though, which was nice. Certainly a higher percentage than if he's been with the version of Niki from his own world. Haha, isn't that so sad and fucked up? Wow. He sure enjoyed having to confront the reality that someone he once considered one of his dearest friends had hated him with a burning passion.

Getting in the car and buckling his seatbelt, he definitely did not immediately associate the vehicle with the lighthearted banter he'd shared with Quackity. Not even a little bit. Even if, hypothetically, he did think about Quackity, it absolutely did not hurt so much he almost felt he couldn't breathe. That would simply be an overreaction and very smooth brained of him. His brain was not smooth, he did not have glass for brain disease. His brain was in fact very large and contained more wrinkles than Philza Minecraft's elderly face.

Face pressing against the cool glass, he stared out the car window and watched the city zip by. Niki and Puffy were talking about something, but he couldn't bring himself to care. He was transfixed by the constantly shifting surroundings, the way they moved so fast and yet he couldn't even feel it. The car didn't have even a trace of that sharp stinging of wind on your

face from a trident or particularly quick minecart. Yet, it seemed to be so much faster than any minecart could ever hope to be. Even one going downhill on powered rails. He wondered how much damage it'd do if somebody got hit by one of these. *'I'd like to test that on Dream'* he thought idly.

Zoned out as he was, it took Tommy a bit to realize the car had stopped. A few moments later, it occurred to him that he should get out. Both Niki and Puffy were standing on the black material that seemed to be a strange mix of gravel and black concrete. The car was stopped neatly between a couple white lines painted onto the ground, and he saw a couple shops in front of him. He wondered which they would be entering.

The first had a large dark wooden sign, with the name Monopoly Menagerie proudly displayed in large golden letters. ~~It did not remind him of the Golden Goose at all. It didn't.~~ The menagerie, for some reasons, displayed not one but *two* glowing signs in bright neon letters that declared them to be open. Maybe they were extra open. Open twice. It's not like Tommy understands how businesses operate in this weird-ass world with their weird-ass superheroes.

The second shop was painted in reds and whites (something Tommy highly approved of.) Dogwarts, according to the pretty lettering above the entryway. The faint sound of barking could be heard from behind the glass and iron door, muffled but still recognizable. If he had to take a wild guess, Tommy would say that this might be *dogs* inside. This was based off nothing but his own flawless intuition.

Puffy led them into the second shop. The second the door opened, his suspicions were confirmed. (Not the ones of inevitable betrayal and/or abandonment.) This was, in fact, dogs inside. Dogs of different shapes and ages, playing in little areas fenced off by something that looked like if you turned chainmail armor into a fence. They all seemed happy, which was nice. Nothing like the angry barks and bowls of the hound army on doomsday. *That* had certainly been his least favorite dog moment so far.

After scanning the room for threats and finding it to be relatively safe, he turned his gaze to the two very pogchamp women that had brought him here. The duo were looking at him expectantly. Was this some kind of weird fucking test? Was he supposed to, like, interrogate the dogs or something? Because if so they should have at *least* let him study. That's just basic manners.

Deciding to voice his concerns (albeit in a less accusatory manner,) Tommy said "So! What are we doing in this dogs place?"

"Well, our conversation earlier got me thinking!" Puffy smiled at him, and what gave her the *right* to have such a warm smile. "I wanted to get you a dog."

Niki nodded. "Plus, I feel a bit bad about having to send away those chickens you... *made*." Her expression pinched a bit on the last word, before returning to normal. "We don't have a yard to keep birds in, but a dog could be fine in the apartment as long as you take it on walks?"

It was a genuine struggle to keep a stupid grin from finding his face. Tommy wasn't getting attached or anything. He *wasn't*. But... he would never deny his love of animals. Creatures truly were the best thing to ever start existing. Dogs? Beautiful. Perfect ten out of eight. Stunning. Love is stored in the dog. He would *not* be opposed to a new fluffy friend. Unlike a person, a pet would never betray him or lie to him or tell him to die. One of their many amazing features.

Tommy spent a few minutes just looking at the adorable pups, taking in the sheer wholesomeness of it all. Truly too good for this (or any) world. He would be an excellent father to any of them. Fatherinnit arc? Yes. He was ready for this responsibility. Especially considering how well he had raised his beloved Shroud. The spider didn't even attack him! He never had! They were besties!

His thoughts of what a competent parental figure he was to animals were rudely cut short by the appearance of some guy. Tommy could say with full certainty that this was nobody from the SMP. While the royal red aesthetic and cheap plastic crown did ring a few bells, he also had long brown hair in a neat braid, sunglasses firmly fixed on his face, and a pair of wolflike ears. When the guy spoke, his voice was wholly unfamiliar.

"Greetings, my dudes! I'm Ren, the owner of this fine establishment. If you are looking for dogs or any dog-related giblets, you've come to the right place."

It was honestly refreshing, to see somebody he didn't recognize in the slightest. A confirmation that he wasn't fated to only have meaningful interactions with alternate versions of people from his past. While some may argue that an employee at the pet store just doing their job is not a meaningful interaction, Tommy would argue shut the fuck up and let him have this. This last week and a half has really been a long year.

Puffy, perfect saint that she was, led the conversation and spared Tommy from needing to formulate something coherent to say. She explained to the guy that they were looking for a nice calm dog for Tommy. He found himself nodding along in agreement. Calm animals were good to have around when he was stressed, and these days that was pretty much his constant state.

"Alright." Renegade, or whatever the guy's name was, turned to Tommy. "Would ya like to give the dogs some treats, see how you get along? Feel the puppy love?"

Tommy's face twisted in confusion. "Feed them treats? Like, by hand?"

Render distance blinked at him. "Yeeees? They don't bite, if that's what's got ya worried."

He shook his head, not wanting to seem disrespectful and accidentally start a fight or some shit. "Uh- no. I'm not doubting your dog raising skills, I just- it's- well, if you're *sure*."

Tommy approached one of the dog pens, containing a big healthy bulldog, an affable golden retriever, and a very dignified poodle mix. He considered his options carefully. Tommy really hoped he was understanding the instructions correctly. Stepping forward a couple more paces, he offered treats to both the poodle and the bulldog. Big, loyal dogs with a bit of

strength to back them up. Adorable too. The two accepted the treats, and Tommy watched patiently.

The trip to get a dog for Tommy had been going normally. Or, as normal as anything can be when you're housing a child with unbridled chaotic potential and heaps of trauma. Of course, that's when something weird had to happen. Niki was disappointed in herself that she really hadn't seen it coming.

The second Tommy fed those treats to those dogs, something... happened. Cartoonish shiny red hearts appeared above their heads, drifting upwards a bit before disappearing and being replaced with some more hearts closer to their head.

They were hardly given a moment to process this odd visual effect before being faced with something stranger. The two dogs he had fed approached each other, pressing their foreheads together. A quick glance at Tommy showed him to be unsurprised, as though this were the exact expected outcome. The dogs held their heads together for a few moments, before an entire puppy just *appeared* between them. The predominantly white and slightly curly coat with some black patches revealed it to be a cross between the two breeds. *What?*

It took Niki a few moments to register that her mouth was hanging open, trying to make sense of what she'd just seen. It defied all logic. An entire living creature, just... appearing? From nothing? Absolutely unheard of.

"What the fuck are you guys staring at? I just bred the dogs! That's what you wanted me to do! ...Right?" Tommy's defensiveness quickly gave way to anxious uncertainty. Niki hardly registered his words over her own shock at what she'd just witnessed.

"...Those doggos are both male. They don't even have their bits..." The shop owner, Ren, muttered with a hollow kind of disbelief.

"Don't be *stupid*." Tommy scoffed. "Animals can't be male or female. They're just animals. Don't got gender and shit, just vibes."

Niki thought back to the chickens, and was hit with two realizations at once.

- 1- Her belief based reality alteration power theory was looking a hell of a lot more plausible, and
- 2- Clearly, nobody had ever given Tommy The Talk. Poor kid evidently had *no* idea how sex worked.

They should probably help him out with that. *That* would be a fun conversation.

...Yeah, she would let Puffy handle that one.

You KNOW I can't resist the third life references. You KNOW it.

If you're curious: the bulldog was specifically an American bulldog. Unlike English and French bulldogs, they have a much easier time breathing AND they are actually capable of caring for cattle. They're large stocky dogs, with calmer demeanors and are very sweet and loyal. I love them.

ALSO. If you enjoy my writing and want a say in which of my MANY high quality AUs I write next, please vote here! You can vote for as many options as you want!

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Sometimes Tommy DOES get to have nice things!

Chapter Notes

This chapter is. A *little* longer than I had expected. Whoops?

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After the adults took a few minutes to freak out for some reason, (there was a chance that maybe animals in this world weren't supposed to breed like that. Not really Tommy's problem though) they came to the excellent decision that Tommy would be receiving the new puppy. He would have revolted had they settled on anything else, but they didn't need to know that. The pet shop worker guy, who was named Rental Car or something, muttered some nonsense about the puppy already being two months old. Now, Tommy was no time expert, but he was pretty sure it had *just* been made. Like, fresh out the oven or whatever. He wouldn't embarrass the already confused and distressed man further by pointing this out, though. He was far too generous and compassionate to do such a thing. (He didn't want the man changing his mind about letting Tommy keep this very adorable puppy.)

The car ride ~~home~~ back to Niki and Puffy's apartment consisted of the pair muttering back and forth to each other about something or other Tommy couldn't quite hear, while he ignored them in favor of admiring the absolutely perfect animal in his hands. It was tiny and soft, looking at him with large, adoring eyes. Not to mention how *warm* it felt. He could feel his heart melting faster than a snowball in the nether. The puppy's tiny, whiplike tail wagged quickly as Tommy gently scratched its head. He had always loved animals, and couldn't help but coo at the precious little creature held in his hands.

"Look at you! Awww you're so *small*! And you want to be friends with *me*!"

It looked at him with such absolute trust and affection, honest in a way no sentient person could ever hope to be. The puppy gave a soft, high pitched bark, and Tommy couldn't resist kissing its tiny nose. It couldn't be helped how much he absolutely loved the little guy, not when it was so absolutely adorable. So squishy and tiny in his hands. Not when it was staring at him with those big, innocent eyes. The puppy was so fragile, and Tommy was comparatively so large and strong. Yet, it held not an ounce of fear towards him. Tommy could hardly remember a time he had been like that, so willing to trust. Freely giving his love to anyone who showed him an ounce of affection. Oblivious to the horrors of the world.

He missed that version of himself. The boy, (the *child*, really, despite how vehemently he'd denied it at the time) not yet broken down by wars and deaths and betrayals. By harsh words and harsher hits, and explosions that all blurred together in his nightmares every time he found a moment to rest. Even if it was just an animal, he firmly resolved to never allow this puppy to experience even a fraction of the pain he had. (*Secretly, Tommy wished that someone back then, back before everything, had seen him and thought that same. Sure, he*

was a big man who could take care of himself, but he hadn't been back then. Oh how desperately he wished he'd never had to. Not that he would be caught dead admitting it.)

The puppy licked his hand, bringing Tommy's focus back to the present. Animals truly were the best thing to ever exist. He would lay down his life for this tiny dog. He had assigned himself as its sworn knight, its loyal guardian. Defending the pup to his very last breath. Sapnap had better watch his fucking back. Wait no, Tommy didn't want to think about Sapnap! He wanted to focus on happy things, like the adorable little puppy in lap. Positivity and all that shit. Focus on the good stuff so that he doesn't spend three days just lying in bed wishing he could cease to exist! A high quality, no refund, satisfaction guaranteed, one-hundred-percent-foolproof tried and true Tommyinnit Strategy (trademark pending.)

Admiring the little pup that was slowly falling asleep on his legs, Tommy decided that such a fantastic creature deserved an equally fantastic name. He couldn't keep referring to it as "the dog" and "the puppy," that was just disrespectful! That would be like if people just called him "the human" or "the blond" or "the sad guy who can't even hear the sound of a creeper blowing up without having a stupid little panic attack." Tommy would not enjoy that at all, and probably neither did... uh... Je- Jang- Jop- Jer...emy? Jeremy. Probably neither did Jeremy, his absolute beloved. The best dog ever to live. All other dogs paled in comparison. Yeah, that was a nice name. *Jeremy*. He was content with that. Hopefully Jeremy felt the same.

Niki and Puffy's little conversation seemed to have died out, so Tommy saw this as an opportunity to formally introduce his new child. He decided to call Jeremy a son, because he felt like it. It's not like animals understood the concept of gender anyways, that was just a people thing. Even then, some people didn't do it either. It was like fruit. Sometimes you throw it at people because they're doing a really bad job giving a speech, and then they start chasing you with a knife. This metaphor makes a lot of sense, but only to people with as many brain cells as the great Tommyinnit.

...What was he doing again? Oh, right. Introducing the Jeremy.

"This dog is my son and his name is Jeremy and if any of you slander him, I *will* stab shit." Tommy declared grandly, voice a bit lower than usual so as not to disturb his peacefully dozing son.

"That's a cute name!" Niki replied cheerfully, ignoring his threat entirely. Rude.

Puffy nodded in agreement, turning around to face him. "So, uh. This trip wasn't really what I *expected*," she laughed cheerfully "-but... Do you like the dog?"

Tommy blinked. "Are you kidding me? I fucking *love* this dog. He's perfect. Now that I have this dog, my pronouns are he but not him. Because I could never be him. Nobody could. They'll never manage to achieve even a fraction of his greatness. I truly am a father now. Father Innit they will call me."

Somehow, Puffy's expression brightened further. Her smile shone like the sun, and made Tommy feel about as warm. Part of him ached for the version of Puffy back on the SMP, but... here was pretty good too. She was just as compassionate, just as inexplicably kind.

Despite all the tiny differences, the way she managed to make Tommy feel like he mattered was exactly the same. He ignored the tiny voice in the back of his mind that whispered ‘She’s kind of like a mom to me.’ No, he did not need to force a family dynamic on this perfectly good friendship just because he was a sad and lonely man. They were maybe his friends, and that could be enough for him.

The rest of the drive was similarly pleasant, with friendly conversation with Niki and Puffy and the gentle, comforting weight of Jeremy in his lap to keep him grounded. He was able to, for just a moment, forget that he couldn’t actually trust them. Not yet, at very least. It didn’t matter how much his little bitch of a heart wanted to care and be cared for, he had to keep a healthy distance. To protect himself. Someday, ~~once~~ if they’d shown that they really did want him around, that they weren’t going to hurt him, maybe then he could just let himself be happy without that reminder to stay cautious and alert at all times. Maybe then Tommy could let himself think of them as the thing he desperately craved, as something resembling family. If they even wanted that with him.

Despite knowing how dangerous it was to hope, he really hoped that “someday” actually happened at some undetermined point in the future. *It would be nice*, Tommy thought to himself. *It really would be nice.*

As he surveyed the enemies and scanned the alleyway for possible exit routes, Sapnap winced. The situation was... not looking great for him. One of his opponents had visible electricity crackling up and down their body, and another was quickly growing a set of nasty-looking metal spikes all along their arms. A third particularly noteworthy opponent had several knives floating in front of their face, points aimed directly for Sapnap. The rest of the group had no visible powers, but were all armed to the teeth with guns and swords. They stood with practiced discipline, showing that these were *not* a bunch of rookies he’d be able to take down without a struggle. They were well trained, and the open hostility they showed made it clear they weren’t here to fuck around. He would have his work cut out for him.

Sapnap prepared to shift in and out of his bear form, something he didn’t have to do often. That was a particularly draining strategy and as such was usually reserved for serious fights. This was definitely panning out to be a challenge. He’d been asked to investigate a suspicious figure lurking in an alleyway, only to be cornered by about eight people in nondescript black clothing and ski masks. Even if the opponents hadn’t had the numbers, this would still be a rough one. At least three of them visibly had combat-effective powers, and he was completely surrounded. There were no accessible exits, with Sapnap boxed like a fish in the narrow alley. It would take at least twenty minutes for Dream to arrive and provide backup from where he was patrolling, and even longer for George. One of the few cons of being so high in the hero rankings, the HQ didn’t prioritize making sure he had people nearby in case he got in too deep the way they did with the more vulnerable heroes. It had been months since him, George, and Dream had all gotten to patrol together despite the fact that the three of them were literally a team.

He did his best to control the rhythm of the fight, knowing that the second he let his enemies set the pace he’d pretty much as good as lost. It was a struggle to keep up with the attack from all sides and angles, even as he was able to quickly incapacitate the telekinetic one as

well one of the people holding a gun with a couple well-timed blows to the head. The fight felt like treading water after running a marathon, barely having the ability to keep himself afloat and uncertain how much longer that would last. It was pretty clear that this wasn't a fight he could win, not alone. He had already pressed the button on his suit to request immediate backup. It would be a battle of endurance, trying to hold out long enough for help to arrive.

Until then, he just had to keep his head above water and hope he didn't slip up. Even the tiniest mistake could spell his end. The way these people fought, they were out for blood. If Sapnap failed here, he would probably die. He couldn't die. He'd never be able to forgive himself for doing that to Karl and Quackity. They would be devastated, and he could never make the people he loves more than anything in the world go through that. Not to mention how Dream and George would feel, or how his dads would be forced to cope with losing a son. He wanted to live for himself, but even more than that, he wanted to live for everyone he cared about. So he just couldn't let himself fuck this up.

He took down two other gunmen, though not without suffering a nasty gash to the shoulder courtesy of that one person's spikes. Those things were sharper than they looked, and he was incredibly grateful he'd gotten his tetanus shot. The wound stung like a bitch, inhibiting his ability to properly throw punches with his left arm. It didn't feel deep enough that he was in immediate danger of dying from blood loss, so he gritted his teeth and forced himself to push through the pain. It'd be at least ten minutes until reinforcements got here, and ten minutes was practically an eternity in an active battle. He couldn't afford to rest his injured arm, not now.

The fight was so fast paced, he didn't have even a second to breathe or come up with a plan. Time moved so quickly and so slowly all at once, giving him no time to process anything that was happening yet somehow stretching itself like a laughy taffy to become the longest ten minutes of his life. A bullet grazed his ear, taking a tiny chunk of flesh and leaving him with a dull ringing. He was more concerned for the loss of awareness than the pain, seeing as only one of those things could be the tiny disadvantage to spell his doom. He'd been a hero for a couple years now, and was no stranger to getting hurt. He would have time to recover later, but only if he made it through this. He despised the fact that it was an "if" and not a "when."

The uncertainty of whether this fight would be his last was eating away at him, and he desperately tried to shove the thought aside so he could focus. He shifted into a bear right on top of the person with electricity powers, hearing a terrible snap as they went limp. That- that wasn't their *spine*, was it? He- *fuck*. He hadn't meant to do that. Even if these people were playing for blood, he was a *hero*. He wasn't supposed to kill people, no matter *what* crime they had committed. He wasn't a murderer. He was trying to pin them long enough to render the foe unconscious not- not to-

He transformed back into a human in time to evade a bullet to the side, his already labored breath beginning to shake as he blinked the tears away from his eyes in a panic. Blurry vision would only inhibit him, and he still had three more people to worry about. Possibly more, if any of the people on the ground managed to get themselves back into the fight. He had no idea how much longer it'd be until someone showed up to aid him. For all he knew, no one was even coming.

That particular fear was quickly disproven as he heard the sound of rapid footsteps along the rooftops, sparing the briefest possible glance to survey whether it was an ally or a new enemy. The eye-searing shade of lime green told him everything he needed to know, as Sapnap continued to fight with a renewed spirit. Dream was here, and it was going to be okay. He wasn't going to die here. ~~The person he just killed had, though.~~

No. No no no. He hadn't- he hadn't killed them. They could still be alive. They *had* to still be alive. There was no other option. He couldn't- Sapnap didn't think he'd be able to live with himself if he had actually killed someone. It didn't matter that they were trying to kill *him*, he was supposed to be *better*. He was supposed to be a hero. Even if he didn't feel like much of one at the moment. What kind of hero would fail so miserably as to actually end a life? Not that he had done that. He hadn't.

The leeway given by Dream's assistance apparently created room for Sapnap to have a mental breakdown, though he didn't stop fighting for a second. Even if his attack were a bit too wild, a bit uncoordinated, Dream's presence at his side was enough to make up for it. To fill out the quickly growing gaps in his defense. He was exhausted and terrified, not to mention a bit lightheaded. He wasn't sure if that last one was from the stress or the blood loss. Either way, he was running on fumes.

It was over not too long after Dream arrived, the man was Technoblade's only real competition for the number one hero spot for a *reason*. As soon as all the enemies were disarmed and fit with cuffs that had power nullifiers in them, Sapnap crumpled. He let himself collapse, hardly registering the impact with the unforgiving concrete. Everything was too blurry in his mind to pick it out, but he wasn't sure if that person had died or not. The not knowing was killing him far more than the sluggishly bleeding wounds that dotted his body.

He was vaguely aware of being put on a stretcher and taken to the medical wing of the hero's tower, but everything felt distant and hazy. He was far too exhausted to move or speak, and hardly conscious enough to process anything happening around him. The few snippets of conversation he managed to catch were nothing but gibberish to his half-asleep mind. and quickly forgotten.

It was a few hours later that he woke up, Dream sitting at his bedside with anxiety practically radiating from him as concern shone clearly in his eyes. He was still dressed in his full hero garb, save for the white smiley face mask which was probably sitting somewhere nearby. He was wringing his hands together, but perked up slightly when he noticed that Sapnap's eyes were open.

"Sapnap you- you *scared* me." Dream's voice was choked with emotion, and Sapnap felt a wave of guilt at seeing his friend so distraught over him.

"Sorry." He mumbled, still exhausted enough that even speaking took a monumental effort.

He knew there was something he had to ask about, something *really* important, but trying to look through his recent memories felt like wading through molasses. It was right there on the tip of his tongue, but Sapnap just couldn't quite grasp it. He realized that the knot of guilt in his chest wasn't just from worrying Dream, but was tied to whatever he was trying to remember. Something had happened, something bad. He should know this. It had happened

today, so why was he struggling so much to recall it? This shouldn't- It shouldn't be that hard!

The guilt he felt intensified tenfold as he finally managed to remember, and he had to choke down the urge to vomit. He hadn't... *Had he?*

"*D-Dream?*" His voice was weak, though no longer just from lack of energy.

"Yeah?"

"Did I- That- The person with the hoodie that was unzipped. Are they...?" He trailed off, unable to bring himself to actually say the words. He just hoped Dream would understand what he was asking.

"Are they... oh. *Oh!* They're fine, Sapnap. You just broke one of their ribs, but they'll be okay. It'll heal. It's okay."

There weren't nearly enough words in every language combined to describe the immense relief that washed over Sapnap at those words. The confirmation that he wasn't a murderer. He finally felt like he could *breathe* again. He'd never been so glad to be wrong in his entire life. He swore to himself to train harder, and to be more cautious in the future. It had been okay this time, but he couldn't risk the possibility of a future where it wouldn't be. Where he actually *did* end somebody's life.

Thinking back to the attack, the whole thing had been weird. To be attacked by such highly trained people, with those numbers, in the inner ring? Maybe if he'd been raiding some business that was a front for a major drug operation, or confronting some minor mob boss, this would make sense. But it was just an ambush in a random alleyway. If this were the work of some villain, one of their cronies would surely have at least mentioned their name to make sure their boss got the proper credit for their hard work. It didn't add up.

The worst part was, this wasn't an isolated incident. Something similar, though with slightly less people, had happened to one of the newer heroes only four days prior. They had barely managed to escape with their life, and all of their attackers had gotten away without a trace. The whole thing had been brushed off as them stumbling upon some gang dealings, seeing as it occurred in the outer ring. Now though, he wasn't quite convinced at the explanation. This was... concerning, to say the least. Sapnap knew the saying. Once is a fluke, twice is a coincidence, three times is a pattern.

He really hoped this didn't become a pattern.

It was a new day, and Tommy had been spending it bonding with his beautiful son Jeremy. The only break he'd taken from supervising his beloved puppy was to eat, and even that he kept as brief as possible. He was *not* being overprotective, he just didn't want to lose another pet. Was that really too much to ask? According to pretty much anyone on the DSMP, the answer would be a resounding 'yes.' That server was absolute shit though. Tommy let out a sigh. Puffy was still sleeping, and Niki was working down in her bakery again. He was

content just letting the time slip by. He was vibing on the couch with Jeremy snuggled comfortably into his lap when he got a text.

Now, being the incredibly popular man he was, Tommy often gets texts. (Usually from Quackity or his boyfriends desperately begging him to just talk to them, but that's just details.) The only reason he found this noteworthy enough to distract him from his son was because of the faint surprise he felt at seeing the message's sender was someone unusual. Unusual as in somebody he hadn't really talked to much, and as in generally just a weird fucking guy. It was *Fundy*, of all people. Curiosity getting the best of him, Tommy opened his phone to see what furry boy wanted with him.

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Hey

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: You

Tommy: yaeh?

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: I don't care what drama you have going on with Quackity

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: None of my business

Tommy: ddi you relaly text me jsut to say thst

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Nope!

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Anyways. Come hang out with me and Ranboo and Tubbo

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: Tubbo says he'll turn you into an invertebrate if you show up

Tommy: tll him he dosent have to maek up wordsr to get me to shwow up

Wilbur's Furry Son 🦊: I- Yknow what, sure.

Almost as soon as Tommy sent his sort-of agreement, he wondered if he was making a mistake. It could very easily be a trap, or some weird attempt by Quackity to trick Tommy into talking to him. Plus, he didn't even know what he was signing up for by saying he'd meet with them. What would they expect from him? What would they do if he failed to meet those expectations?

"What do *you* think I should do, Jeremy?"

Jeremy gave a little bark and nudged Tommy's hand with his nose. Tommy nodded seriously, taking the wise pup's advice to heart. Truer words had never been spoken, in the history of all of existence itself. No god or mortal would ever possess the incredible brainpower held by the one and only Jeremy. The best person to go to with any dilemma.

"You're so right, big man. I oughta go so Tubbo doesn't try an' follow through on whatever *he* think that threat's supposed to mean. He doesn't know where I'm staying, but knowing Tubbo, that wouldn't fuckin' stop him."

Being a responsible father who would never abandon his son under any circumstances, (looking at you, Philza Minecraft!) Tommy decided to bring Jeremy with him. It could be his son's first adventure into the world. Get him some of that good life experience, to prepare him for the day he eventually went to uni or whatever. Tommy wouldn't know. He hadn't had time for any schooling past high school, what with the wars and everything. Somehow, despite this, Tommy was still the smartest man alive other than Jeremy. He was just so very poggers like that.

After a couple long minutes of arduous google searches, Tommy discovered that he could input the street names Fundy had texted him into the "mapping" app on his phone to get directions. Finally, he could find places without having to rely on whatever random adult had most recently taken enough pity on him to let him stay in their home. He let Niki know that he was heading out, and would be returning at some unknown point in time. She wished him well and told him to stay safe with such a genuine tone of voice that it made Tommy slightly emotional. He rushed out of the bakery a bit quicker than strictly necessary.

Tommy felt a bit hesitant to go to an unfamiliar location to hang out with three people he hardly knew. He had met this version of Fundy literally once, and had only ever talked to Tubbo and Ranboo before through the group chat. Even if he didn't *think* this was some kind of setup, it wouldn't hurt to be cautious. He had an idea, but had to weigh it carefully in his mind before committing. Deciding to take a risk, Tommy opened his phone again. A few quick texts later, and he was on his way. Jeremy was, of course, held safely in his arms. The collar and leash that Puffy had bought were both equipped, though Tommy still needed to find a name tag. He might have to go fishing for one.

The place Fundy had asked to meet was, according to google, a big fucking park. (It had used more boring descriptors, but Tommy chose to spice it up.) If the robot in his phone was not telling lies, it would take Tommy about twenty minutes to walk there. He chose to consider this a personal challenge, with the goal of arriving as quickly as possible. Just to prove to the robot that it had underestimated his power. Focusing on the trip itself helped him to push aside any anxiety related to his destination, and was therefore a tactically sound decision. Tommy had always been something of a tactician at heart, even if he wasn't necessarily too good at it. Not where it really counted. He could come up with objectively the best strategy for winning practically any game, but fell flat when it came to actual important stuff like war plans.

He arrived a full ten minutes before the app said he would, (take that, robo-bitch!) and was hardly even tired. That was probably the endurance he'd been forced to develop. His hunger was still at like three quarters, too. Not too bad considering he had half-walked, half-ran the entire way. Tommy had of course been careful not to move *too* fast, as he would sooner return himself to limbo than do anything to disturb or upset Jeremy. That puppy deserved literally everything ever.

Quickly assessing his surroundings, Tommy saw a fox hybrid in a bright pink jacket conversing with a short guy and a very tall guy at the other end of the park. While it was obvious these were the people he was looking for, he chose to stay at a distance and lower his head so they wouldn't recognize him. He mentally cursed himself for not taking one of the

hoodies that Puffy had been so generous as to gift him. He wouldn't avoid them for the whole time, obviously. Just for a little longer. Just until-

"Hey." A voice came from directly behind him, making Tommy flinch and whirl around as quickly as was physically possible.

It was surprising that somebody had managed to sneak up on him with how alert Tommy was at all times, but then again his hearing was a bit fucked from all the explosions. Apparently living on a server where people treated TNT like a miracle solution to every single problem had consequences, who would've guessed? As his conscious brain registered who exactly had approached him, he slumped forward a bit in relief. It was the singular person he most wanted to see at this particular moment. His backup.

"Dickhead! Give me a fuckin' warning next time!" Tommy complained, glancing down to make sure the sudden movements hadn't startled Jeremy.

Purpled lifted his hands in a placating gesture. "Sorry, sorry. In my defense, this was *way* funnier."

Tommy rolled his eyes. "Oh, fuck off. You're just pissy because you've had to steal on your own."

"I'm just a man trying to make an honest living! Pretty rude that my favorite partner in crime just dipped on me." Despite the words, his tone held no genuine anger.

"Ah yes, an 'honest' living. Taking money from other people's pockets without their knowledge."

Purpled smirked. "Well, I'm honest enough to admit I'm a thief! More than those businessman fucks that come through the casino can say for themselves."

Tommy decided to concede that Purpled did have a point there. As a former con artist himself, he could say without a shred of doubt that at least half of all businesses were a scam on some level. The ones that were genuinely trustworthy were usually smaller establishments, like Niki's bakery. She was an honest person, despite the fact that she was definitely smart, competent, and charming enough to commit many crimes and get away with them. Tommy would call it a wasted opportunity, but honestly Niki was already enough of a girlboss without violating the law. Crime would simply give her too much power. Power that she deserved, but Tommy wasn't certain the world would be able to handle it.

Now that he had Purpled by his side, Tommy felt secure enough to approach the people he was *supposed* to be here to meet with. The closer they got, the clearer Tommy could make out their features. While he'd prepared himself in advance for the tidal wave of emotions that he got seeing Tubbo's face unscarred, he had to physically hold back from doing a double take the moment his eyes landed on Ranboo. He looked so fucking *different*.

His skin was actually a human color, being a pale tan rather than the split black and white Tommy was used to. His hair was fluffier, and all of it was black. This Ranboo's eyes weren't even heterochromatic, but rather both an identical shade of glowing violet. Tommy didn't

look at them for more than a second so as not to bother the guy, but still. It was *weird*. He was clearly still an enderman hybrid, based on the eyes and horns and tail. But this version of Ranboo looked far more human, and there was no trace of whatever his other hybrid half on the DSMP had been. Needless to say, Tommy was reeling. He had to forcefully school his expression so as not to seem weird as fuck.

While all the alternate people he'd met so far looked somewhat different from their counterparts, all of them healthier and missing a plethora of scars, none of the differences had been remotely as drastic as this. Were it not for his height and the fact Tommy had been told that he would be seeing Ranboo, he would absolutely not have recognized him. It made Tommy wonder about the other people from the DSMP, if they had all counterparts and how they looked.

He was absolutely certain that there was no alternate Tommy. Tubbo's face showed no hint of recognition towards Tommy until Fundy introduced him, and he couldn't imagine a world where he wasn't by Tubbo's side. Or... well. Him and Tubbo hadn't actually been all too much of a duo for a while before he'd gotten transported here. Still, it was completely out of the question to consider a world where him and Tubbo both existed but had never met. It violated all laws of nature, making about as much sense as an enderman throwing a pool party.

Talking with Tubbo and Ranboo was so much easier than he had expected. It almost scared him, how naturally he fell into their dynamic, slotting in like a missing piece of a puzzle. There were so many differences Tommy could list about them in comparison to their counterparts, but their senses of humor were almost exactly the same. Ranboo's dry quips and Tubbo's utter nonsense were just so achingly familiar, it stabbed Tommy right through the heart with a crushing wave of homesickness. He did his best not to let it show.

Fundy was there too, but it was different. Joking with him felt more like learning something new, rather than diving back into a skill that was sort of rusty but still there. The fox hybrid might have been Tommy's kind-of nephew once, but their relationship had decayed and crumbled while he wasn't looking. It seemed like only days ago that they were joking together in L'manberg, but it also felt like it had been years since he'd so much as seen Fundy's face. The contradiction was slightly headache-inducing, so Tommy chose not to think about it too hard. What mattered was that he could build a friendship with this version of Fundy, right now, and this one wouldn't have to fall apart due to neglect.

Huh. He wondered when he'd started thinking of the future in terms of this world, as opposed to what he'd do when got home. He could hardly even call it home, feeling so much safer in this world than he had on the SMP since- well, since the early days of L'manberg. Even if he wasn't quite ready to call this world home yet, Tommy thought that he might be able to. One day. It wasn't like he knew if he'd ever get the chance to go back to the DSMP or not. He may not have any other option.

While hanging out with Tubbo, Ranboo, and Fundy was way less stressful than Tommy anticipated, he was still incredibly glad to have Purpled by his side. This was his emotional support criminal. Purpled was someone Tommy was confident enough to call a friend. He also knew that worst-case scenario, Purpled would be able to help him in a fight. Tommy

would even go so far as to be willing to trust him to watch his back. Maybe it was stupid to put so much faith in someone he hardly knew, but they really had bonded.

Tommy was delighted that everyone seemed to love Jeremy just as much as he did. As they should. Honestly though, what kind of person *wouldn't* be excited by the chance to see a cute baby animal? That was one of the little joys that made life feel worth it. Jeremy had certainly seemed happy for the chance to run and play in the grass. Tommy couldn't deny that here, with Purpled and three people that he could really see himself calling friends in the near future, he felt a lot lighter than he had in a while. Maybe he almost understood Wilbur's ramblings about finally being alive. If this was what life felt like, then Tommy would simply have to pull a Philza and become immortal so he never had to lose it.

The only real moment of stress he had was when Tubbo had asked if he could hold the puppy. Tommy had been strongly conflicted, and probably seemed weird from the others' perspectives. It was a simple and normal question, but he had frozen and taken an awkward amount of time to answer it. The decision was hard, though. Yes, this was Tubbo. He wanted to trust him. Because, like, it was *Tubbo*. But at the same time... Tommy knew all too well how much power he'd be handing over by letting someone else hold his *pet* who he *loved*. The very thought made him painfully anxious.

In the end he'd agreed, though he could tell by the look in Purpled's eyes that his tension and hesitance didn't go unnoticed. He felt like a bit of a dick for being so weird about it, but couldn't deny how much better he felt the moment Jeremy was back in his own arms. Where nobody would be able to take or hurt him without Tommy being able to put up a fight. He was just tired of losing things. Maybe it was selfish, but he really didn't want to lose Jeremy too.

Aside from the incredible amounts of anxiety that rose up upon placing his puppy into someone else's hands, the day was overall positive. The five spent hours just laughing and joking, and it started to get dark without them even noticing. It was only when the streetlamps (which seemed to be powered by redstone probably connected to a daylight sensor) clicked on that they realized just how late it had gotten. They parted ways, but it felt far more like a "see you later" than a "goodbye." He hoped they did hang out again sometime soon. It had been fun.

Wilbur had been a hero for just over five years now. Suffice to say, he wasn't exactly new to the business. He'd seen a lot of weird things during his career, (god that made him sound old-) and was experienced enough to know that what was going on right now was concerning. Two highly irregular attacks following the same pattern in under a week, in addition to the councilman who'd been assassinated. While it would be easier (and a lot better for his stress levels) to write these things off as a coincidence, he had a hunch it was connected. Three incredible abnormal situations occurring in such a short timeframe? It was nothing if not suspicious.

Based on the above average competence of the people who'd carried out the attacks, as well as the efficiency with which the politicians had been assassinated, whoever was behind this clearly knew what they were doing. That was what scared him. That, paired with the fact that

the person pulling the strings had yet to take credit. Even though it wasn't necessarily the most tactically sound decision, the city's villains all seemed to be constantly vying for the spotlight. Most any villain would have proudly declared themselves responsible for the attack by now, if this situation still had a shred of normalcy.

Alas, it appeared that whatever higher power pulled the strings didn't want to grant Wilbur this small mercy. He was left grasping at straws, trying to piece together what was going on before it escalated from a concerning situation to a full-scale disaster. It was like trying to put together a puzzle, but 90% of the pieces in front of him were from different puzzles and there were no edge pieces whatsoever. In short, a fucking nightmare.

While his colleagues agreed it was strange, none of them seemed to be taking it as seriously as he was. For god's sake, Sapnap had gotten badly injured! How did they not see what was at stake here? If attacks like this continued, and more heroes got gravely injured and put out of commission, it would leave the city vulnerable. If Wilbur was right and something bigger was at play here, the repercussions could be absolutely devastating.

...He had a theory. It may seem a bit presumptuous, but Wilbur thought it had merit. The leader of the Winged Alliance had been suspiciously quiet the last week or so, without being spotted a single time. While it wasn't too unusual for him to take breaks in favor of letting his teammates do his dirty work, the timing was undeniably suspicious. He didn't think it was a coincidence.

His dad kept telling him he needed to stop worrying, but Wilbur personally thought that everybody else should worry *more*. But, the more people asked him to calm down, the more he doubted himself. Maybe he really was just blowing this out of proportion. It was well known that he had a tendency to worry about things way more than he actually should. He tried to force himself to relax.

It was probably fine.

Tommy got home around eight, feeling worn out but nevertheless happy. He'd actually had a really good time. Jeremy felt the same he was pretty sure, considering the puppy was asleep in his arms but his tail was still wagging ever so slightly. He was more than ready to pass out, but the state of his hunger bar told him he should probably get something to eat first. Skipping meals was a bad habit he'd worked really fucking hard to beat, and he wasn't going to just throw that progress out the window.

Gently setting his beloved puppy on the living room floor, he ambled towards the kitchen. Tommy really hoped there was something in the fridge he could just eat as-is, because he did *not* have the energy to cook right now. The first few days staying here he'd been hesitant to just take food from the kitchen when he was hungry, but Niki and Puffy had reassured him multiple times that it was fine. To ignore that would be basically saying that he thought they were liars, and that would not be very poggers of him. Quite rudechamp, even.

Returning to the living room with his bounty, (a slice of leftover pizza) Tommy startled slightly upon noticing there was somebody on the couch. Puffy was there, but there was

something off about her posture. It made him nervous. Was she upset that he went out? Had he done something wrong? Was this the part where she kicked him out?

His brain moved a mile a minute, but he forced himself to walk over to the armchair with feigned calm. He noticed how she was doing that thing where she was staring at him but trying to make it seem like she wasn't staring at him. It only fueled his growing anxiety. Taking a large bite from his pizza, he frantically scanned the room for Jeremy. The puppy was fine, still asleep on the ground right where Tommy had put him down. It was okay.

Puffy took a deep breath, and Tommy tensed. "Hey, Tommy. I've got- Um, I've got a question for you."

"Yeah?" He did his best to keep his voice from wavering.

"Has- Niki brought this up, and I've got to ask. Has anyone ever given you The Talk?"

His nose scrunched as he tried to parse out what she meant by that. Based on the emphasis she'd given the words, this was something he was probably supposed to know. Wracking his brain, he ultimately came up empty. He had no fucking clue what that was supposed to mean. He told her as much, and she just nodded.

"Yeah, that's what Niki thought. So. Do you know what sex is, Tommy?"

He did a double take, trying to find any indication that he'd misheard. What the fuck. Literally what had prompted this. The question was so out of the blue, it took him several seconds to formulate a response. Whatever he'd thought would happen when he walked in and saw Puffy acting weird, this certainly wasn't it.

"It's- of *course* I know what sex is! I *wrote* the instruction manuals!"

She blinked. "Instruction... manuals?"

"How to sex volumes one through four. The ghost of my dead brother said they were 'really inaccurate,' but was just being a little hater." Tommy explained calmly.

"The- the *what!*?"

"How to sex volumes one through four." He repeated slowly.

She shook her head aggressively. "No no no, what was that part about your brother?"

He clapped his hands together as loudly as possible. "Well! I think that's it for Tommyinnit today, I'd better get some sleep. Hit the hay, as some would say. Oh, that rhymed! I should be a fucking poet. Anyways, if you could get off my sleeping couch that would be very poggers. Thank you Puffy!"

She relented, but the look on her face told him that this conversation wasn't over. Whoops, he had *not* meant to bring up Ghostbur. That was a bit of an uh-oh moment. Epic gamer fail cringe compilation volume thirty-two. Just another item on the miles long list of his fuck-ups.

Or, in layman's terms, a problem for *later* Tommy.

Chapter End Notes

In this house we love Jeremy.

How'd you guys like this chapter? We got some PLOT and some Child Gang Bonding Hours! Rejoice people, for I have provided you with such excellent nourishment. Now you will be able to survive the long, harsh winter.

ALSO.

The results for the fic voting poll are in, and the winner is the accidental demon summoning! Go read chapter one now, I worked really fucking hard on it. Give me attention <3

<https://archiveofourown.org/works/37678603/chapters/94059913>

A new challenger enters the ring!

Chapter Notes

GET YOUR CONTENT!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The beams of sunshine assaulting his eyes, paired with the faint sounds coming from the kitchen, served to inform Tommy that it was in fact a new day. He could hear Jeremy's tiny claws clicking against the wooden floorboards somewhere in the room, assuring him that the pup was safe. Sitting up, he grimaced slightly at the crick in his neck from sleeping on a sofa. Honestly, why did his body have to be a dramatic bitch like that? The couch wasn't even uncomfortable! He would have to look into finding some wool so he could craft a proper bed.

That wasn't urgent, though, so he filed it into the back of his mind with full awareness there was a 84% chance the thought would be completely forgotten within an hour. Sometimes his short-term memory granted him nothing but L's, and he simply had to cope. Quite a tragedy to befall such an intelligent and talented large man. If only he could remember everything ever all of the time (except that long list of shit he did *not* want to ever think about,) then he would be the most powerful man ever to live. Everyone on the server would approach him and say "Oh, Tommyinnit, haver of many wives and even more skills, please help me with my problems!" and he would say "Okay."

Ah, to ponder the life that could have been. Maybe if he really were that competent, people wouldn't fuck with him all the time. Wouldn't that be nice? A life where he wouldn't have to worry that every person claiming to care for him was simply biding their time until they could tear him apart from the inside out. Not that there was much work left to do in that department, his mental state was about as fragile as those stupid card houses Wilbur would make in limbo on the rare occasion he got tired of solitaire.

Rubbing the crust from his eyes, Tommy stretched and stood up. He had slept in his clothes again, which was fine because he hadn't been doing anything like running or fighting or mining to get them all gross. Plus, since he was sleeping on the couch he would have to go all the way to the bathroom to change and what kind of bitch is willing to walk those fifteen extra steps before bed? Absolutely ridiculous.

After a tireless and arduous search that lasted only a few moments, he located his beloved Jeremy. He gave the dog a brief inspection, breathing a sigh of relief when there were no visible injuries anywhere on him. Tommy didn't *think* Puffy or Niki would hurt the innocent puppy, but it never hurt to be cautious. Plus, their window were just *glass*! Anyone could easily tower up, break in, and do whatever the fuck they pleased without even needing a pickaxe. At least he could be secure in the knowledge that the noise of glass shattering would

almost definitely wake him if that were to happen. Tommy had become a light sleeper during the first war, and his alertness only increased over time.

Breakfast passed by uneventfully. Cooked food was still somewhat of a novelty, though Tommy was growing less surprised with each passing meal that had some amount of genuine effort put into it. It appeared that in this world, people cared about their food a lot. He couldn't remember seeing a single crafted loaf of bread or furnace-blasted steak in his stay here. Was that one of the perks of living a peaceful life? If he had never had to worry about being attacked or killed, would Tommy have learned to cook back home? Eaten food that actually tasted good every single day?

...Probably not. It was still a lot of fucking effort to do so often, when he could be off doing big man shit. Like finding cool flowers or robbing a bitch. Now that he paused to think about it, at least half of the shit he considered to be normal hobbies were just crimes. Was that bad? It had been normal back in the SMP, but that place wasn't exactly a shining beacon of acceptable values. He had heard of other servers, where wars were always preceded by the word "prank" and harmless jokes never escalated to loss of lives or destruction of nations. Tommy had always believed that to be like, fairy tales or something. But if this alternate world was able to have so many hundreds of people without constant chaos and destruction, maybe it was possible. It kind of sucked to consider that he could have had a good, stress-free life if he'd only been lucky enough to be born somewhere better. That all of his pain and suffering was due to the circumstances he was brought into the world, and could have easily been avoided.

When the sky had started to darken and Puffy still hadn't mentioned their conversation from the night before, Tommy thought that he had managed to get away with it. He had *not* meant to mention Ghostbur, and if he had to make a list about everything he would like to talk about, it would be near the bottom. Tommy didn't want to have to explain that the sweet, innocent ghost had been brutally killed because of him. That he had fucked up while blindly seeking revenge, and recklessly endangered one of the last people that actually fucking cared about him.

Unfortunately, it appeared that the sheep hybrid had not managed to conveniently forget everything from the last twenty four hours just because Tommy wanted her to. Rude. After having done a quick (and successful!) sidequest of popping down to the bakery to beg for a cookie, he returned to the cozy upstairs apartment expecting to enjoy his hard-earned treat in peace. It was very difficult asking for things, no matter how small, when his stupid little insecurities were there telling him he was selfish and awful for wanting anything ever. He was working on getting better at that though, which was why he deserved his reward.

Unfortunately, he was greeted by a sight very similar to the one day before. Puffy was once again seated on the couch, her face having that we-are-going-to-have-a-conversation expression. The *audacity*. Here Tommy was, trying to celebrate getting a good grade in mental health, when an alternate universe version of his favorite woman had to absolutely obliterate the vibes with her concern and seriousness. This was the sort of modern tragedy that he could write an entire musical about, and then everyone would sing his songs and he would be very famous and popular. He would be able to weaponize his army of loyal fans and use them to turn everyones' houses to cobblestone, making the entire world a more

beautiful place. He would be a he- wait no. Scratch that. He did *not* want to be any sort of hero, even in a joking sense. Shit titles like that full of pressure that made people severely misunderstand his motives were not exactly for him.

...What had he just been thinking about again?

Oh right, Puffy. She was still sitting and looking at him, seeming even more concerned than before. How long had he been zoned out? This is like a Tubbo Moment, except that he is not Tubbo and in fact the real- or, the *original* Tubbo is in an entire different world where Dream is loose and could hunt him down at any moment and oh *fuck* how was Tommy so stupid that he hadn't considered that earlier?

He didn't notice the cookie he had been so happy to acquire tumble from his failing grip and land on the ground.

What kind of terrible person was he, abandoning Tubbo to any of the various horrible things Tommy knew Dream to be capable of? He could be dead, or *worse*. Dream had vowed to repeatedly murder and resurrect Tommy, a kind of torture that made his chest tighten and his eyes water even to think about. What if Dream, unable to find Tommy, had decided to go after Tubbo instead? How could Tommy even call himself a friend if he had abandoned Tubbo without once in these past weeks considering the possible repercussions?

It felt as though his ribs were caved in, his chest constricting and squeezing the air out of his lungs as his breath came in sharp gasps. The pressing sensation on all sides was like wearing a chestplate several sizes too small, his panic spiking as his mind screamed that he was *trapped*. Tommy's thoughts lost coherence, only vague images of Dream and Tubbo and explosions and the void flashing in his mind as his limbs shook violently. He was hardly aware of the room around him, the corners of his vision rapidly darkening until he could scarcely see anything except the blurry impression of his own trembling hands.

His ears were ringing, why were they ringing? He thought he could taste ash in his mouth. Something had probably been blown up again. That was always happening. He always lost things, whether it be his items (*-put your things in the hole, Tommy-*) or his home (*-it was never meant to be-*) or his friends. (*-it's been so long, why hasn't anyone visited? Please, don't leave me here alone. **Please-***) He was always *losing*. It was almost as though the world itself held some vendetta against him, deeming him eternally unworthy of any lasting happiness. Loss after loss after loss until he had nothing left. Not even himself. He didn't know who he *was* anymore, not really. How much of himself had he given to other people, only to be left behind? How much of himself had always been a facade, and attempt to be more likable? To meet the expectations of others? How much had once been real, but was now permanently lost? Crushed into dust finer than the sand of that beach that haunted him, or else blown to bits in yet another earth-shattering explosion.

His conscious thought returned to him slowly, as his tunnel vision began to recede and he was able to somewhat reign in his breathing. After a few torturously long moments, he was no longer gasping for air like a beached fish and had regained motor function. His head was still a bit fuzzy, so he scanned his surroundings to take stock of the situation. Upon registering that he didn't seem to be in any immediate danger, he let his muscles untense and put his energy into processing the things he saw.

He was in Niki and Puffy's apartment, kneeling on the wooden floorboards. His legs must've given out during that panic attack. He winced slightly at the discomfort. His entire body ached slightly, but the dull discomfort from his boney limbs pressing into the hard flooring was particularly irritating. Tommy's brow furrowed. Why had he been panicking again? He looked up, and startled slightly when he noticed Puffy was crouched right in front of him. How long had she been there? Looking into her eyes, it was impossible to perceive that look as anything but deep and genuine worry. It tugged painfully at his chest, just how much she seemed to *care*. He couldn't even begin to guess why. He was somebody she had met scarcely a week and a half ago (two weeks, counting the group chat.) For her to be so emotionally invested in him was absolutely unfathomable.

Tommy gave a weak chuckle, desperately scrambling for some way to play off what had just happened. Aside from being *fucking embarrassing*, he knew that such a display of weakness in front of *anybody* could be dangerous. Vulnerabilities are easily exploited. He harshly rubbed a knuckle across his face, wiping away any water that had leaked from his eyes. Trying to wipe away the evidence that he was, generally, not doing okay.

"Sorry 'bout that! Bit of a- bit of a trauma moment. Not a big deal or anything." He tried, inwardly cursing how rough his voice sounded.

"I- that was an entire panic attack. Are you okay?" Puffy had a sort of nervous and twitchy energy about her now, like she desperately wanted to help but had no clue what to do with herself.

Tommy shrugged. "All good here, big P! Now-" He loudly clapped his hands together, as though trying to physically crush the previous topic of conversation. "When I got here, it looked like you wanted to ask me something. Let's focus on that, hm?"

Puffy looked uncertain. "I was going to ask about- you said something pretty worrying about your... brother?" Her eyes darted up and down his face searchingly. Hurriedly, she added "It's okay if you don't want to talk about it right now though! We could- uh- ...play a game?"

Tommy was now faced with an incredibly difficult decision. She was giving him an out, one he would gladly have taken before his whole panic thing. Plus, he probably shouldn't be discussing heavy shit like Wilbur while he was in a fragile state of mind. Not to mention, if he *did* talk about it, he would have to be all stealthy so that she didn't make the connection to this world's Wilbur and the guy that was Tommy's kind-of brother. Otherwise, he'd have to end up explaining the whole I'm-from-an-alternate-universe situation and the last time he'd done that, well. What happened with Quackity was certainly something he'd prefer to avoid repeating.

So yeah, there were a lot of reasons to take the easy route and simply not talk about it. But... If Tommy did that, he'd probably still have to deal with it later. *If* he stayed here that long. Also, there was the possibility that talking about Wilbur a little bit might distract Puffy or something and then he would never have to explain that panic attack! Absolutely foolproof, ten out of ten strategy. A plan that definitely makes sense, with exactly zero flaws.

Standing and dusting himself off, Tommy finally said. "Nahhh, it's fine. I'm too powerful to be stopped by shit like that." He gestured vaguely to the floor he had collapsed onto minutes

earlier.

Puffy looked incredibly skeptical. “If you’re sure.”

He nodded. “It’s not that complicated, really. My brother was pretty poggers, and then got kicked out of our ‘ome and stopped being poggers and instead decided to blow our home up.” Tommy reflected on the explosions planted under the stage, and how Wilbur had appointed him president. “He might’ve tried to kill me a little bit, actually. Then again, who hasn’t?”

Puffy looked like she had a lot she wanted to say, but remained silent. Tommy was grateful for this, because if she had interrupted he probably would’ve lost his confidence and stopped talking.

“So then- basically he did his stupid fucking thing with the explosives and then got himself stabbed- stabbed to death.” Tommy choked on his words a bit, but pushed forward. “And then a bit later he showed up all gray and floaty and see-through and shit. And called himself Ghostb- uhh... Ghost... Boy. Yeah. Called ‘imself ghost boy and didn’t remember any of the fucked up shit he’d done or anything. Really loved the color blue. That’s about it.”

The sheep hybrid blinked a couple times, before saying “Wow! What the fuck!”

Tommy nodded in agreement. A quite apt summary of the entire situation. “Couldn’t ‘ave said it better myself.”

Unbeknownst to Tommy, Puffy, like many other alternate-world citizens before her, had just come to a conclusion. Also much like the others, it failed to align with anything believed by the previous Tommyinnit theorists. Yes, she was definitely concerned by everything he’d said. (and the fucking panic attack he’d had right in front of her) Puffy was also definitely considering getting this kid professional help. However, the main thought currently running through her mind was *“Oh shit, this kid’s power is talking to dead people.”*

It was a couple days after what Tommy had decided to dub the “not-poggers panic time incident,” and things had been surprisingly normal. Puffy had been merciful, not bringing up anything from that day. He didn’t know if she’d told Niki about it or not, but either way nobody had mentioned it so he was absolutely chilling. He had several more cookies over this brief timespan, solidifying his opinion that Niki was absolutely amazing regardless of world. (Even when the Niki from the DSMP had tried to kill him, he could hardly hold it against her. It was hard for him to really be angry at people he cared about.)

The worry for his Tubbo lingered in his mind, but as he forcefully reminded himself several times there was nothing he could do. Like everyone else, Tommy was subject to the whims of the gods. It was not his choice to come here, and he did not have the option to just return. It wasn’t his fault. Other than that, he just tried to convince himself that everything would be okay. Tubbo was a lot smarter and tougher than people thought. He could take care of himself. He’d be fine. (*Please let him be fine.*)

Aside from ever-present anxiety over the fate of his best friend, Tommy had been fairly content. He had good food and relative safety, and he wasn’t alone. He could text Purpled,

Tubbo, Ranboo, and Fundy whenever he wanted. He'd been talking to them more and more, craving connection. They made him happy, and he was really fucking grateful to have that. Niki and Puffy had been nice to him, but thankfully neither did that annoying thing some people did where they treated Tommy like he was made of glass.

Puffy was... a bit odd, though. He'd certainly noticed that her sleep patterns were different than the Puffy *he* was used to, but had dismissed it as some quirk of being from another world. She had the same caring-yet-simultaneously-full-of-chaos personality, which was comfortingly familiar. She'd even invented a fun game for the two of them, where they sat at the window and mocked the outfits of people walking by. Whenever Puffy made some particular jab that left Tommy in stitches, he could feel that sense of belonging that so often escaped him.

That much was all great. The thing was... he could've *sworn* he heard her sneaking out the window the night before. He knew it wasn't Niki, because the sound of clicking hooves was unmistakable. That somewhat suspicious behavior put Tommy on edge. Why wouldn't she just use the front door, like a normal person? What kind of wrong'un sneaks out the window of their own home? Was she hiding something? If so, the window thing would make sense. Tommy slept in the living room, so she wouldn't be able to exit through the door without him noticing.

The thought that Puffy was keeping secrets scared him a bit, even if it was unreasonable. She hardly knew him, of course she wasn't required to divulge all her personal business. Besides, for all Tommy knew, she could have been just trying to go out without passing through the living room and waking him up. Maybe she was just considerate. He shouldn't jump to conclusions.

Any unease surrounding Puffy was actively ignored. He did not need that kind of negativity in his life. What was the saying? Live, laugh, larceny or something? Yes, that's correct. In order to feel fulfillment in his personal life and prevent his own paranoia from besting him, Tommy simply needed to steal. This was what finally prompted him to bravely venture into Niki's bakery.

Being three pm on a Wednesday afternoon, the place was a bit less crowded. He was half-tempted to simply rob the people here, but he didn't have Purpled's cool floaty magic or his proficiency in stealth. If he got caught, people might be mad at Niki and that simply was not acceptable. If he knew anything, it was that the consequences of his actions specifically would always be twelve times more extreme than necessary, and nobody else should have to deal with that.

This decided, Tommy resolved to hang out for a bit and then contact Purpled for some Crime Time. A plan he would have followed through on if it weren't for a familiar voice reaching his ears the second he approached Niki to see if she wanted to chat.

"-got absolutely *owned*. Now I gotta do twice as much to pick up the slack. Not that I blame him or anythin', but I swear the bosses are tryin' to turn me into some sort of workaholic!"

In hindsight, maybe Tommy should have recognized that Niki's smile was more genuine than the customer service one, and that the person she was talking to had a very distinct head of

rose pink hair. In his defense, he'd been far too busy thinking thoughts of crime. How could he, a seasoned war veteran who had once fallen victim to a lethal ambush, have known that paying attention to his surroundings would be important?

Tommy was about to turn right the fuck back around because, y'know, *Technoblade*. Unfortunately for him, it was in his moment of hesitation that Niki took notice of his arrival and called out to him. It was too late, if he turned around now it would be awkward as fuck and make him seem pretty weirdchamp. Sighing, he resigned himself to having to deal with an annoying pig bitch. At least any fear he could've felt was outweighed by the amusement of knowing that alternate Techno was a *hero* that worked for the *government*! The Technoblade from the SMP would probably shit himself and then explode if he saw this.

Both of them were looking at him, so Tommy figured he should probably say some words. "Ayup!"

...Or one word. That works too.

"Hi Tommy! This is my friend Techno," Niki smacked Technoblade's arm lightly. "Techno, say hi!"

There was a weird expression on Techno's face for a moment, but it passed quickly. "...Hullo."

Tommy looked alternate Technoblade up and down, noting that he was far less imposing than his anarchist counterpart. For one, he was a boar hybrid instead of a full piglin. That meant that he was a lot more expressive, and also not as fuck-off huge. He had a reasonable height and muscle mass, which brought an idea to Tommy's mind. He grinned mischievously, looking Techno directly in the eyes.

"I reckon I could take you in a fight." He declared boldly.

Techno raised an eyebrow. "Sure you could."

"I- Tommy, is that how you usually introduce yourself to people?" Niki giggled, on hand covering her mouth.

He ignored the commentary, continuing to make aggressive eye contact with the boar hybrid. "Fight me."

"*Heh!?*"

When Techno made the decision to visit Niki at her bakery today, he had not been expecting this. He was aware Niki and her girlfriend had taken in some kid a couple weeks ago, but what he hadn't known was that it was the same feral child who'd criticized his hero uniform and then obliterated a mugger in an alleyway less than a month ago. Honestly, Techno had *not* been expecting to see him again. Now that very child was asking him, in civilian form, to fight. For seemingly no reason.

There was something else about Tommy, something nagging at Techno's mind. He couldn't quite pin it down, but he was sure he'd get it eventually. Presently, he was more concerned about the fact that a literal child had decided to challenge him. Techno wouldn't deny that he had an above average appreciation for combat, but he wasn't going to just deck a scrawny teenager. Regardless of who initiated. That didn't mean he wouldn't annoy him a little, though. Just a tiny bit. Retaliation for laughing at him last time they'd met.

"Sorry, I don't fight toddlers. I got *morals*." He replied teasingly.

The kid spluttered, incredibly offended. "Fuck you! 'Oh, mimimi I'm pig boy and I am too afraid to fight Tommyinnit because he's too big of a man and I know that I will lose!'" he mocked in a high pitched voice that did not even remotely sound like Techno. "That's what you sound like, bitch!"

Techno glanced at Niki, hoping she could reign in the feral teenager somewhat, but she seemed too busy laughing to be of any help. Kind of rude, honestly.

"Ah yes, I am absolutely terrified. A child with no muscles whatsoever, my worst fear! How did you know?" Techno deadpanned.

"Oh fuck off. You really are an absolute *bitch*, did you know that?"

"I've been told." He replied, thinking of Wilbur.

Tommy continued trying in vain to get a rise out of him, the attempts more amusing than anything else. Even if the teen wasn't exactly too successful in his goal to irritate Techno into compliance, he couldn't deny that his resolve was being slowly worn away. The kid seemed legitimately eager to spar with him, and Techno was well enough trained that he could hold himself back. While he was unsure what had sparked Tommy's sudden determination to fight him, he did know that the kid was at least somewhat capable in combat. The practiced ease with which he'd knocked out that mugger was proof enough.

Niki had regained composure, though her tone was still dripping with amusement as she egged Tommy on. It had been like two weeks, and she'd practically already adopted this kid. Techno would deny that was surprising to him. While he wouldn't say she was closed off or cold, Niki also wasn't the type to just go around scooping up children. Before he saw her interact with Tommy, he would never have said she was the parental type. Not that she wouldn't be good at it, but Techno had been friends with her for quite some time and she'd never expressed any interest in becoming a mother.

After nearly half an hour of goading, he agreed to spar Tommy on the condition that they set some ground rules so no one actually got hurt. Even if his hero identity was built around being ruthless, Techno firmly drew the line at beating up a child. That would just be messed up. They ended up agreeing on the terms of no powers, no attacks to the face or head, and that both of them would pull their punches. Niki seemed a bit hesitant about letting them fight, but Techno could tell that she trusted him not to actually injure Tommy. He gave her a slight nod, an unspoken promise to prove her trust in him was not unfounded.

They decided to go up to Niki's apartment, rather than duking it out in the middle of a crowded bakery. Puffy was awake by now, and agreed to take over working the counter at the bakery for a bit so Niki could supervise their spar. They pushed the couch out of the way, freeing up enough of the living room that they could fight pretty well. It was still a cramped space, but Techno had plenty of practice fighting in suboptimal conditions. It was part of the job, after all.

Tommy was a lot more talented than he had anticipated. The kid had a fiery kind of determination in his eyes, and the kind of unwavering confidence that spoke of real world experience. His reflexes were well honed, with reaction times that could rival some of the best heroes in the business. Needless to say, Techno was impressed. Tommy seemed to be adept in anticipating Techno's moves, and countered them with expert efficiency. The spar lasted nearly twelve minutes, leaving both of them exhausted. Surprisingly, it ended in a draw. Both had gotten some good hits in, but there was no clear winner. It was definitely concerning how well this kid fought, only lending further credence to his theory that Tommy had escaped from a fighting ring.

They shook hands, Techno giving the kid a sincere compliment. Tommy tried to act like he didn't care, but the way his eyes lit up at the praise told a different story. Niki, of course, showered the child in enough compliments to give him an ego bigger than *Wilbur's*. A bit overboard, but Techno supposed it was earned.

After the excitement of the fight had died down, Niki returned to the bakery. Rather than awkwardly following the person he knew like a child being led through a shopping mall for the first time, Techno found himself actually engaging in conversation with Tommy. At least half of it was about crimes, something that as a hero he should not be endorsing. He was willing to let it slide if it was funny though, and Tommy's plan of robbing a store using only a live bird of "Whatever type I catch first" as a weapon definitely met that requirement.

They continued to talk, the entire interaction shockingly pleasant considering how he detested having to interact with strangers. It appeared that he had found an exception to his general distaste towards children. Wilbur would be comically annoyed that Techno had been willing to come around for a random child that Niki had picked up, but not Fundy. To be fair, Fundy was an absolute menace. At least *Tommy* had never assaulted Techno with over a hundred raw eggs. Seriously, where did Fundy even *get* that many eggs?

Hm... speaking of Wilbur. That nagging thing in his mind was starting to act up again. It was a bit more forceful this time. Techno thought back to the first time he'd met Tommy, trying to conjure the memory in more detail. While it had certainly stood out because of how incredibly strange the kid was, it was still just one minor crime out of the dozens he handled every day. He let Tommy and Niki banter with each other while he concentrated. It clicked suddenly, and Techno didn't know whether to laugh or facepalm.

This was *Tommy*. The kid Wilbur wouldn't stop complaining about for *days*. The kid who Quackity had found and immediately adopted. Who they had been frantically looking for since he disappeared, on the same day he was found by Niki and Puffy. Perhaps Techno, being a good kind-of-friend to Sapnap, should call him right now and let him know his

missing child had been located. However, Techno couldn't deny that he understood why people saw Tommy and immediately started drafting adoption papers.

Now, the morality on this may be dubious, but Techno *might* just conveniently forget to contact Sapnap or his boyfriends. He may have decided to adopt Tommy himself. In his defense, the kid threw a mean right hook. It was also genuinely enjoyable to talk to him, despite the fact that Technoblade considered social interaction to be the peak of suffering. He had never before thought of becoming a father, not even in passing, but Tommy was just built different. He was so incredibly son shaped.

What was Techno *supposed* to do, not adopt him? Out of the question.

Chapter End Notes

Hey bestiessssss. So about why this took so long: I did not feel like writing. So I simply didn't. Absolutely buckwild, right?

Instead, I became a Gamer™! Utilizing the powers of Idaho, Whackus Bonkus, Send mark in again, cheese (/sx), edgy warrior cats, LoRd SeNtInEl tHeLeC, and developing anger issues like the rest of us, I managed to achieve gold rank one and almost got to platinum (i would BE there if it werent for all these "people" who are not REAL.) These nerds got absolutely BOIZED. Only people who play the free game Minion Masters on steam will understand 😂😍👉 (not sponsored)

Originally the chapter was gonna be like double this length, but I figured after so long without content you must all be starving like the poor little orphan children you are. I am your only oasis in the vast and unforgiving desert, and have so generously provided this chapter to you. Fear not my children, for more is on its way at some point some day some time. Heart emoji.

Everyone wants to adopt the Tommyinnit

Chapter Notes

I bring you a BOUNTY of content. Not only is this LONG, SO much happens in this one. Hopefully this was worth the wait <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

As they continued to speak, Tommy noticed that Techno had this weirdly thoughtful sort of expression. It made him a bit uneasy. He knew how smart Technoblade was back in the DSMP. The piglin had always possessed a natural talent for strategy, drafting up complex and highly effective war plans in a matter of hours when it would take anyone else days. *This* version of the pig was plainly different in many ways. He talked to new people with more ease, (even if he was still an awkward little bitch) and he was definitely not as talented of a fighter. Original Technoblade could've wiped the floor with Tommy without even breaking a sweat. The fact Tommy had not only managed to hold his own, but bring the battle to a draw, had been downright shocking.

Honestly, that was ninety-percent of the reason Tommy had challenged him in the first place. To get a sense of what he'd potentially have to stand up against. Even if Tommy didn't *want* to become enemies with this alternate version of his... Former friend/ally/assigned-brother-by-Wilbur or *whatever* Technoblade had been to him, it was important to be prepared for any possibility. Maybe it was just wishful thinking, and because the piglin happened to be on his mind, but Tommy faintly felt that Technoblade would be proud of him for thinking ahead like that. (If the piglin hadn't hated him, that was.) Especially because Tommy had a habit of being impulsive.

Incredible big-man anticipation for the probably-inevitable conflict aside, Tommy was getting majorly creeped out by the boar hybrid's intense expression. Technoblade's dark eyes shone with intelligence, the same calculating and carefully measured glint one would find in the gaze of a wolf preparing to pounce. To further the metaphor, Tommy felt a lot like a sheep standing paralyzed by fear when faced with something much stronger than itself. Even if he had *just* proven that not to be the case. Niki had gone downstairs to do... Something, (Tommy may not have been paying attention when she talked. Oops.) so he was all alone with somebody he *knew* could be dangerous. A threat. Tommy couldn't help but worry over the possibility Techno had been holding back in their spar, a clever tactic to deceive Tommy into lowering his guard. The uncertainty of everything was getting to Tommy, making him twitchy and tense with the nervous energy running through his system. It made him want to run far away. To hide somewhere he couldn't be found. To protect himself at all costs.

He wasn't a coward though, and he wasn't about to make himself look weak in front of Technoblade just because of some bad vibes. He would simply have to interrogate the suspect for staring at him like some kind of wrong'un. Heh. *Suspect*. Amogus. Technoblade seemed

like the kind of guy to be an impostor, the bastard. He'd self-report and then manage to plead his case in that completely flat monotone, and nobody would even be able to tell that he was a liar and a criminal.

Wait, fuck. Tommy had been about to say something. Focus time. He was *focusing*. Staying on topic, even in his own mind. As difficult as this was for him to say, now was not the time for his amazing amogus jokes. Those would need to be postponed. He took a deep breath before finally speaking.

"Why the *fuck* are you looking at me like that? I am a *minor* you know." Tommy tacked on a joke at the end, hoping to disguise any hint of anxiety in his posture and tone.

The boar hybrid startled slightly, clearly not expecting to be called out. However, Tommy did pride in the small snort that the second half of his question had earned. That's right, he's hilarious, bitch! You *better* acknowledge it. Humor is what some would consider Tommyinnit's main talent.

Techno hummed noncommittally in response to the question before nodding his head faintly. "Yup. I believe I've made my decision."

"...And that is?" Tommy raised an eyebrow, subtly shifting his feet so he could slip into a fighting stance more easily if the need arose.

"You're my son now."

Tommy blinked aggressively. He wasn't sure what he'd been expecting Techno to say, but it definitely wasn't *that*! He had been afraid that Techno somehow knew he didn't belong here and was about to call him out. Or maybe that he'd somehow magically detected Tommy's (very pog but also numerous) crimes. Hell, he'd been prepared to deal with practically anything! But not... *this*! How is someone supposed to reply in this situation? Are there even set social conventions for surprise adoption?

The teen tossed his head back, face buried in his hands, and let out a dramatic groan. "Why do strange men keep trying to parent me!? I'm not some fuckin'- Some helpless orphaned child or whatever!"

"Of course not, Tommy. You're my very powerful son." Techno replied, no trace of a joke in his tone.

Tommy liked to think he'd gotten pretty good at reading emotion in Technoblade's voice. This was a necessary skill, seeing as the slight fluctuations in pitch were often the only clue as to what he was feeling. Piglins didn't have the most expressive facial structure, and rarely emoted in a manner recognizable to other humanoids. Additionally, the warrior prided himself on always keeping composure, rarely allowing his ears or posture to betray any trace of his inner thoughts. If you wanted to understand how he felt, it was all in the voice. Not only had Tommy spent significant time living with Techno during both of his exiles, he was pretty good at reading people's tone in general. It was a vital survival skill, more than anything. He *could* read Techno.

So, while Tommy was able to easily tell that he wasn't being mocked or patronized, he was *also* forced to process the fact there was a very high chance this man was genuinely serious about adopting him. Really, *Technoblade*, of all people? If someone had told him just a couple days ago that Technoblade, the "Blood God" himself, would be attempting to assert himself as a father figure to Tommy, he would've called them insane. That was how ridiculous this entire situation was.

"I do not think you can just *decide* that you're my father and suddenly you are." Tommy pointed out, skepticism plainly written across his features.

Techno sighed deeply. "Is this because of Quackity?"

"Wh- what? How did you-" Tommy reeled back, the cold sensation of fear rising faintly in his chest.

"Because I can assure you I am *much* cooler than that guy. Quackity is a *nerd*."

He had no clue how the fuck to react. This entire conversation felt like one sudden twist and turn after the other, leaving him no time to pause and catch his breath. Like a roller coaster where every rail was powered. Techno fucking *knew*? He knew about Quackity, about where Tommy had been before? Was he *also* involved with Dream? Would he be sending Tommy back to them?

But then again, here he was, trying to dispute Quackity and boyfriends' former claim to the highly prestigious title of "Tommyinnit's Father." This implied that Technoblade intended to keep Tommy for himself in a manner of speaking and do... Whatever things parents are supposed to do with their kids. (Not that he was a child, of course, he was a Big Man™) It isn't like Tommy really knew what parenting things were, seeing as he had very little firsthand experience. From his experience so far, the list seemed to include encouraging crime and panicking over minor shit like nether portals. Not the most difficult *or* exciting job, in his humble opinion.

In lieu of a reply, Tommy just stared at the boar hybrid in front of him blankly. He tried frantically to calculate a course of action. A plan to carefully navigate this insane situation with minimal risks. But, it seemed his mind was rather insistent on straying off topic today. He couldn't help but wonder what the *fuck* Niki was doing that was taking her so long. Surely, if Niki were here, she would berate her friend for being incredibly weirdchamp and trying to procure fathering rights to a random teenager that he'd just met. Wouldn't she?

While trying to deduce the whereabouts of the absolutely poggers woman who'd given him food and shelter seemingly with no expectation of repayment, he noticed something. It seemed his mind had gone a full 360, wandering back to the situation at hand. As Tommy continued to stand there in stunned silence, Techno was growing increasingly uncomfortable. The boar was now shifting from foot to foot anxiously, causing a faint squeaking to echo from the thick soles of his boots scraping against the polished wood plank flooring. It appeared that the lack of response was causing Techno's previous confidence to diminish rapidly. It was a small comfort for Tommy, seeing that commanding sense of certainty start to falter. Like they were on even ground, rather than the teen desperately trying to keep up in a race he hadn't known he was meant to be running.

“Uhhh... If you let me adopt you, I’ll get you a gun?” Techno offered with audible hesitation.

A gun. Tommy had heard Purpled talking about these, and after a very noble struggle against his old enemy Google he’d managed to figure out what they were. A weird crossbow-like metal weapon that honestly seemed cool as shit. He couldn’t find any information on what sort of enchants you could put on those things, but he’d definitely love to find out for himself. They were a ranged weapon, but rather than arrows they fired pellets like a slingshot. Slingshots were pretty useless as anything besides a toy. They couldn’t be crafted, meaning the instruments needed to be fashioned exclusively by hand. For all this effort, they would have to be extra effective to make up for it. They weren’t though. Slingshots rarely did enough damage to kill or seriously maim.

Guns, however, were apparently far more effective and deadly than even crossbows. They could *also* be shot multiple times in rapid succession before needing to be reloaded, unlike crossbows. You didn’t need to waste time nocking an arrow and making sure it was pulled back just the right amount like with a traditional bow. Simply put, guns were OP as *fuck*. The teen’s eyes sparkled as a giant grin overtook his face. Yes, he very much would like a gun. Here was an opportunity to finally acquire one, all offered up on a silver platter. How could he say no?

Leaning forwards slightly, Tommy’s tone was full of mischief and poorly-concealed excitement as he said “Father, I crave violence.”

Techno huffed a laugh, wiping a nonexistent tear from his eye. “I raised you so well.”

And if the part of Tommy that still desperately yearned for approval from Technoblade, his childhood idol, started to glow at the praise, nobody had to know.

Tubbo was currently draped over their shitty sofa with all the drama and elegance of a figure in a renaissance painting. His signature snowcoat lay abandoned on the floor, and Ranboo cringed slightly as he eyed the fresh splatters of blood decorating the pale blue garment. He knew from experience that blood was stubborn, rooting itself deeply into fabric until it was almost impossible to remove. His wrists already ached in anticipation of the aggressive scrubbing he had to look forward to. That would be a problem for later, though.

Ranboo noted how his friend was ranting, words pouring from his mouth a mile a minute. Tubbo’s voice had a slightly crunchy quality due to the fact he hadn’t bothered to remove his voice changer yet. Not that Ranboo was judging the goat hybrid for that, because doing so would only make him a complete hypocrite. The enderian himself was still fully geared out, aside from his sunglasses which had been pushed up to his forehead so they wouldn’t obstruct his vision. The pair currently had far more pressing matters at hand than their wardrobe. Namely, the large and gaping wounds that Tubbo had gotten just minutes previous. The goat hybrid didn’t seem all too concerned about the injuries, instead complaining about some guy he’d met a couple weeks ago.

“It’s bullshit! There is *no* reason for him to just- just turn me down like that! I’m a *great* student!”

“We’re literally criminals, Tubbo.” Ranboo replied flatly.

The boy in question rolled his eyes. “I mean, *sure*, but so is he! What’s his fucking problem? Is it *me*? Or is he just being a bitch because...”

Ranboo shook his head faintly in exasperated amusement, tuning out Tubbo’s rambles so he could place his full focus on assessing the wounds. They were gruesome and downright nauseating to look at, but he believed this was still manageable. There shouldn’t be any permanent damage, so long as everything was properly disinfected. Still, Tubbo would definitely be out of commission for a week or two minimum. Ranboo winced, but told himself to be grateful it wasn’t any worse. Getting into a scrape with a hero had *not* been on their agenda for the night, and the duo had been woefully unprepared.

Normally they wouldn’t stray from the outer ring, a decision which *drastically* decreased the risk of any unwanted hero intervention. Seeing a hero out here was like finding a grizzly bear in a parking lot. Rare, shocking, and a good sign that you should turn around and go right back inside. The lack of reliable law enforcement out here made crimes of all varieties much easier to commit.

However, they’d agreed it would be really funny to spray paint a giant penis onto one of the banks that sat between the unofficial border of the middle and inner rings. They even sprung for oil-based paint, just to make their masterpiece more difficult to remove. One of their finer ideas in terms of comedic value, though perhaps not safety. It *had* been hilarious, in their defense. It suddenly became a lot less hilarious when they were being chased down at very high speeds by Guardian Angel, third most prestigious hero in the entire damn city.

Now, this was a problem on its own. The avian was always summoning those annoying-as-heck shields that very rudely made it all but impossible to get a decent shot in. Tubbo couldn’t really do anything to help out, because Angel would just make another barrier to block his attacks. Being practically untouchable, the hero had an unfair advantage in just about every fight. He’d probably be ranked even higher, if it weren’t for the fact he had fewer high-profile arrests. Most big villains worth their salt considered him far too much of a headache to even attempt facing the man, and Ranboo could really understand why.

If it had been *just* Guardian Angel, neither of them would be injured beyond a couple minor scrapes and bruises. Ranboo probably could’ve incapacitated the guy long enough to slip away without too much issue. After all, the shields only blocked physical objects and manifestations of power. His light could pass right through, beaming directly into the dude’s eyes. Studies (conducted by Tubbo and Ranboo themselves, of course,) had shown that people fight a *lot* worse when they’ve been temporarily blinded. It was usually super effective, turning any fight down to easy mode. Keyword there being *usually*.

Tragically, it seemed the universe had decided to screw over Tubbo and Ranboo specifically on this fine evening. As if Angel weren’t enough to deal with alone, Alchemist had also been on the scene. Infuriatingly, he easily fixed the minor retina damage Ranboo caused by giving a quick splash of his health elixirs. The nullification of Ranboo’s ability to forcefully deactivate their eyeballs meant that both members of the little duo were rendered essentially powerless to defend themselves in this scuffle. As hard as he’d been training, Ranboo just

didn't have the power to concentrate on obscuring both heroes at once for long enough to get the pursuers off their tail.

It was a highly stressful situation, and he'd had a brief moment of panic where he wondered if they were about to get arrested. If their life of crime was finally catching up to them. Thankfully, Tubbo eventually managed to outplay the heroes by using a well timed blast of ice to shove a dumpster into their path in a narrow alleyway, forcing them to waste precious seconds climbing over the sudden obstacle or finding a way around. They had been lucky the space was narrow enough to keep Angel grounded, his wingspan far too wide to navigate between the rough brick buildings.

Taking a risk, they decided to duck into the nearest building and hope for the best. Once inside, they got a minute to catch their breath. The tension in the air was stifling, as both remained on high alert for any indication they'd been found. As minutes ticked by, it became increasingly likely they had just gotten away with it. Tubbo slumped against the wall in visible relief, letting out a small laugh. They had really done it.

Just from the ground floor room they'd used as a temporary hide out, they could tell this place was abandoned. Explained the lack of a door. It seemed to be a run-down apartment complex, or else something similar. There were visible water stains below the exposed piping, and jagged holes in the thick concrete wall where it looked like someone had bashed it open and torn out the copper wiring. The windows were loosely boarded up, like it had been done in a hurry. Or, by somebody who didn't really care. Judging by the rough ragged blankets sprawled on the floor, somebody was squatting here. Not wanting to intrude, they left as soon as they felt sure enough that the coast would be clear.

Ranboo was incredibly thankful they hadn't accidentally leaned on one of the exposed rust-covered nails that poked out at odd angles when they two had pressed themselves flat to the wall in a panic, praying they wouldn't be caught. Those were a very blatant safety hazard. The place was an OSHA nightmare, he thought to himself with a touch of amusement. He was fairly sure it also had broken glass littering the ground, though that was pretty much a given. There was a reason nobody in the outer ring ever steps foot outside without a pair of shoes with sturdy soles if they could help it.

Their miraculous escape from two high-profile professionals was an adrenaline rush unlike anything they'd experienced before. Having successfully outplayed two of the best in the business left the two with a strong sense of accomplishment. It was only when the adrenaline started to fade, and their pain receptors made themselves known again, that they realized Alchemist had hit Tubbo with his bloodletting elixir during the chase. The goat hybrid's shoulder and left arm were now missing large chunks of skin where the highly corrosive liquid had made contact with flesh. Were it not for the thick snowcoat that was a signature feature of his vigilante persona, this likely would have caused permanent muscle damage. They'd gotten lucky for sure, but it was still a gnarly wound. Ranboo gasped at the sight, trying his best not to vomit. He really didn't want to puke while wearing a mask.

The enderian was petrified, unable to do much besides watch Tubbo double over and gasp for air. It hit the goat hybrid like a truck, the total agony from his many exposed nerves finally registering the pain all at once. Watching his best friend, his quite literal partner in crime,

suffer like this was more than enough to make Ranboo sick. He could only imagine how *Tubbo* felt. They just had to be glad it wasn't worse. Glad it had only hit his arm, not his face. The guilt and fear Ranboo experienced as he watched the blood flow from Tubbo's gaping wound was unlike anything he'd ever known. Both of them had got their fair share of injuries on duty before, yeah, but nothing like *this*. It reminded him why this was a bad idea. Why he sometimes had doubts about vigilantism.

It wasn't like Ranboo generally disliked being vigilantes. During the day, they were just Ranboo and Tubbo. A socially awkward minimum wage employee who was *technically* legally dead if someone bothered to look into it, and the feral goat hybrid who followed wherever he went like some strange parody of "Mary had a little lamb." But in the nights, when they went out on patrol, they were Blizzard and Lightswitch. Two of the most respected vigilantes in the entire city! Their costumes were homemade, their only training was from themselves and each other, but they'd managed to become something great. They were somebody that the people in the outer ring trusted, felt they could depend on.

Sure, they committed some minor crimes on the side as a treat, but nobody cared except the government. It wasn't like they ever did crimes that would harm people in any significant way. A couple items lifted from Walmart, some graffiti, a watch yanked from some rich bastard's wrist. The sort of thing that was illegal, but not immoral. It canceled out, anyways, with the amount of genuinely *bad* stuff they had prevented. Tubbo said it best. Their philosophy was essentially "Crime, but only for me. The rest of you are on your own I think."

It was fun! Exhilarating! Nothing compared to the feeling of biting wind against their faces as they ran, or the intense rush from a close call. Plus, they were doing real good for the world. Making a positive change for the people around them. Helping those who the heroes so consistently neglected. That in itself was its own reward, but there was also a decent monetary gain. This came almost exclusively in the form of the cash Tubbo cheerfully lifted from any criminal unlucky enough to get captured by the duo.

Well, any criminal that they didn't deem to actually be valid in their unlawful activity. For example, if they found someone was robbing a chain store to feed their kids, they would absolutely look the other way. Sometimes following the law just wasn't an option. Tubbo and Ranboo had *been* in that situation before, and they could always recognize it in another's eyes. That desperation mixed with some level of guilt or anxiety.

They didn't do this to uphold the law to the letter like some kind of *cop*, and it would be rather ironic if they were. Vigilantism *was* a crime, after all. No, they did this to keep people from being hurt. Violent crime was their main target, closely followed by muggers and thieves who targeted local businesses or people who were just as down on their luck as the perpetrator. They ignored drug dealers for the most part, because addicts were people too and making it harder for them to get the substances their bodies depended on would do more harm than good. The only dealers they bothered to take down were ones they found out to be cutting their wares with ingredients that could harm or kill the users.

Despite how many people they helped, this wasn't exactly the safest hobby. Close calls like these ones served as testament to that. It was on nights like these that Ranboo would question if this was *really* worth it. Putting their lives, their freedom, *everything* on the line again and

again. Nothing gave more credence to his doubts and fears than the very tangible evidence of how easily things could go wrong.

Their journey home was rushed, full of an agonizing silence and nervous glances over their shoulders. When they finally arrived at the apartment, Ranboo helped Tubbo onto the couch and darted off to grab their emergency medkit. Something in his chest twinged as he saw the condensation that had gathered in Tubbo's goggle lenses. In the very bottom of the medkit, hidden by a false bottom, was a tiny tub they kept only for emergencies and serious wounds. Ranboo scrambled to retrieve it, knowing every moment he spent fumbling around like this was another moment that his friend was suffering.

He opened the round tub, smearing a generous portion of the paste contained within onto the injury. The tension drained from Tubbo all at once, that tightly pinched expression relaxing as his breaths gradually stabilized. Ranboo released an involuntary sigh of relief now that Tubbo wasn't in horrible pain. The paste was a mixture of strong opiates with a tiny amount of alcohol, serving as an emergency anesthetic that would also disinfect. Normally Ranboo would use hydrogen peroxide to clean out the wound, but he was panicking a little bit and his friend had been in a *lot* of pain.

After that, the process hadn't been too abnormal. Tubbo quickly returned to chattering about something that Ranboo couldn't quite keep up with as his friend did his best to treat the wound. It was too wide for stitches, but it seemed shallow enough that he'd manage without them. Instead, Ranboo did his best to clean up the blood and stray threads around without disturbing the injury, and wrapped the whole thing tightly in gauze. That brought them back to the present.

Ranboo stared at the freshly treated wound, grimacing when he realized it was already showing spots of red through the bandaging. The sight brought back a familiar buzzing anxiety. He did his best to suppress it, though. It might be illegal and highly hazardous work, but it was also important. If they didn't do this, who would?

"-Just saying, with that sort of power, we could take over the *world!*"

Ranboo tuned back in, sighing at his best friend's antics. "Tubbo, first of all, that is very much *not* what we're trying to do here-"

"-It could be!" Tubbo interrupted.

"And secondly, *stop* flailing your arms all around to gesture. I *just* bandaged you up. If you keep aggravating that wound, I swear I am just gonna let you bleed out on the floor. You can just *suffer*, actually."

"But *Boo!* He's committed a serious injustice against me!"

Ranboo pinched his nose bridge. "For the last time, refusing to teach you how he got so good at harnessing his ice power isn't an injustice, it's a reasonable decision."

"Hey! What the fuck is *that* supposed to mean!?"

The enderian hummed some random melody as he cleaned up the bandage packaging and bloodied rags that littered the coffee table. After ferrying the medical waste to their kitchen garbage (not the most sanitary, but better then leaving them lying around.) He also picked up Tubbo's snowcoat to toss into the wash.

"I'm gonna change out of my vigilante clothes now, these things are uncomfortable as *heck*. Do you want me to bring you something to wear from the room?"

"No no no, you don't get to just walk away from me. Answer my *fucking question*. *Ranboo-!*"

Spending the day with Technoblade had been surprisingly fun. The boar had insisted they exit the apartment through the window, for some reason. It was a bit odd, but Tommy was good at MLGs so he didn't really mind. Techno, always the showoff, had parkoured down. He had openly gaped after witnessing Tommy's sick very MLG skills, but hadn't said anything. Tommy figured Techno had just assumed him to be incompetent until this moment. Prick.

Tommy was informed that they were going to be doing a bit of a stealth mission, and *Prime* if that didn't bring back some fucking memories. What was next, a hostage situation? He exhaled dramatically at the thought. Tommy didn't really like thinking about that time. He'd become someone he hadn't liked, too desperate for approval and a sense of belonging to focus on his morals.

Aside from being stealth based, this mission was nothing like... that. The stakes were low. They weren't infiltrating enemy territory, this was literally just Wilbur's home. Tommy almost immediately recognized it from the time he'd awkwardly accompanied Quackity to drop Fundy off. Technoblade neglected to explain exactly *why* they were breaking into Wil's house, instead telling him it would be worth it. The boar wasted no time in starting to poke around the place very methodically, quickly managing to procure the very thing Tommy was doing all of this for- a gun! Fuck yeah! Gun pog!

Tommy had never seen one in person before, but he couldn't *wait* to use it. Next time someone tried to kill him, they'd just get *blasted*. Absolutely annihilation. The world was *not* prepared to handle Tommyinnit with the power of friendship and this gun he found. Green bitch had better watch out, because if Tommy saw him again it would be on *sight*.

Being the lame and terribly boring man he was, Techno strongly insisted that they don't do any actual trigger until later. Until outside. Somewhere far away from any other people. Tommy relented, but only because he didn't want Bitchnoblade trying to revoke his beautiful new weapon. It was like a brother to him at this point, the gun. They had bonded. This gun would never go insane in a ravine or call Dream its hero. It would just shoot his enemies. Emotional attachment established, Tommy decided he would be naming it Shootboy.

Techno *had* proven himself to not be a complete dickhead when he showed Tommy how to load and operate the weapon, putting extra emphasis on keeping the "safety" tab clicked on at all times unless he was actively shooting. From what he'd said, guns can accidentally trigger *real* fuckin' easy. Tommy did not particularly feel like doing any accidental murder. If this really was a permadeath server like Quackity had told him, that would be a *big fucking deal!*

Tommy knew from first-hand experience that being dead was *shit*, and he would not force somebody else to experience that. Except Dream, of course. Dream could *perish*.

Once they were done having weapon times, Tommy was sure to stow the gun away safely in his inventory. He didn't want to worry about it getting lost or stolen. Techno had done a visible double-take for whatever reason when Tommy stored the weapon, but he wrote it off as just more of the boar's inherent strangeness. Gun secured, they moved on.

He'd honestly thought that would be it, seeing as the gun was the only thing Tommy had been offered in exchange for agreeing to the sudden adoption. He was wrong, apparently, as it seemed Techno had more activities in mind. Prime, were *all* parents meant to spend so much time with their kids? It just seemed like overkill.

Back in his own world, Phil had never been like this. Even when the avian would occasionally spend a week or two at home between trips, he didn't spend so long talking to Wilbur. They'd talk over dinner, sure, and *maybe* breakfast on a good day. Phil might take Wil to the market a couple times if he had to make the trip anyways. He'd even given him a small handful of combat lessons and taken him caving once or twice. Never so much all in one day, though. Tommy couldn't *imagine* the avian putting in that sort of effort for a child he'd *just met*.

This was proven by the way Phil had never really paid Tommy any mind. It was understandable, seeing as Tommy wasn't even his son. He was just a random kid Wilbur had picked up from the streets and taken home, like a stray cat or something. In fact, Tommy was pretty sure that Phil's reaction towards the half-feral child Wilbur proudly declared as his baby brother had been something along the lines of "I suppose you can keep the kid, as long as you promise to feed him and clean up after him."

It was as sweet as it was sad, how Wilbur had tried to insist that the four of them were a family when he was younger. They sort of were, Tommy would admit, but *only* from Wilbur's perspective. Techno was Philza's cool best friend, (Tommy's personal hero, as a child) and nothing more. Technoblade was a lot of things. A warrior, an anarchist, a stubborn dickhead. But He was never Phil's son, and he certainly wasn't their brother. No matter how many times Wilbur attempted to argue to the contrary.

Tommy *was* Wilbur's brother, had been since the day Wil found him and took him in. Even then, he sure as fuck had never been Phil's son. Phil never wanted another child, and Tommy didn't exactly need to have some man he hardly knew as a father. Everyone understood that except Wilbur. As a kid, Tommy would often play into the little "family dynamic" that Wil was so attached to, just to see his older brother smile. He'd never actually managed to see Technoblade or Philza as family, though. He knew the feeling was mutual.

His internal ponderings on how weird these alternate peoples' idea of parenting was were cut short when they reached their apparent destination. It was a big building, made of concrete in an odd shade of blue. It was darker and less saturated than lapis, but still far too blue to be black under strange lighting. Tommy reasoned that they must've mixed a bit of ink into blue concrete powder. That would be tedious as *fuck* since that couldn't be crafted. It must've been done manually. Tommy couldn't imagine what kind of person would have that sort of *patience*. He respected the grind, though. It looked nice.

They entered the building, and Techno conversed with some random person sitting behind a glossy black desk. Maybe Tommy should've focused on the words being said, but he was far too distracted by the new material. If it hadn't been for all the people around, he definitely would've stolen a block for himself. Whatever it was was shiny and black, too dark to be netherite but far too glossy for polished blackstone. It was *cool*. It may not particularly fit *his* aesthetic, but he bet Wilbur would've liked it. Would call it "sophisticated," or some shit.

"Hullo? You there kid?" Oh shit, Techno was talking to him. How long had he been sitting here staring at cool blocks?

"Sorry big man, got distracted. You know how it is!"

The boar hybrid nodded, and Tommy felt surprised by how genuine it seemed. "So, uh, are you ready to go in?"

"Sure!" Tommy agreed cheerfully. "One question, though. Where the fuck are we?"

"Oh, uhhh. I forgot to tell you?" Techno looked appropriately sheepish when Tommy confirmed that this was the case. "Well. This is the aquarium."

"Right, right. The aquarium. Yes. Mmm. I know what that means!"

Techno's brows furrowed. "Do you... not know what an aquarium is?"

"Fuck you!"

Not acknowledging the expletive, Techno patiently explained that the aquarium was a big building full of fish. Tommy asked him *why*, and he said that it had fish that were hard to find or lived far away. So that people could look at them, he said. Witness up close something that they otherwise would probably never get the chance to see within their lifetime.

It made sense, kind of. It was like the fish tanks in peoples' restaurants, except instead of a restaurant it was just more fish in there. Tommy personally believed it would be much better if they had other shit, like cool animals. A thought that he immediately voiced out loud. This was the moment he received some *fantastic* news.

Apparently, the aquarium also had some water animals. Tommy wasted no time in insisting that they look at *those* first. Because, animals! To his shock, Technoblade just smiled and agreed. He didn't even mock Tommy for being a child! Alternate universes were fucking weird., Tommy thought for what was probably the thousandth time. Not that Tommy was complaining, *especially* not after seeing the otters.

They were one of the most perfect things he had ever seen, and he loved them with his entire heart. He'd seen otters before, when L'manberg still had that river. Precious creatures, who spent their days playing in the sun and being adorable. He'd never seen any that were this big or furry before, though. Apparently, these ones were a different kind called "sea otters" and they would cuddle each other so they didn't drift out to sea in their sleep.

Tommy *really* wanted a sea otter. He would've just stolen one, but there were way too many witnesses around and he didn't even have a lead. Boat transportation would take too long, and he knew for a *fact* that otters weren't tameable. He had tried *extensively* in his free time before the war had been declared, never achieving anything close to success. Therefore, he was reduced to just staring at the beautiful fluffy creatures with longing. Someday, Tommy promised himself, he *would* acquire an otter. He'd make it his *mission*.

After (reluctantly) moving on from his beloved otters, Tommy requested they pay the seals a little visit. Again, Techno agreed easily and with no criticism. Were he not so distracted by the promise of more cute animals, Tommy would have called him out for being sus. But the seals could do *tricks* and Tommy even got to throw fish to them! This was the fucking best! Tommy loved the aquarium, he decided, when he saw the seals bark happily. They were just dogs, but in the *water*! That made him miss Jeremy. Tommy couldn't wait to see his perfect son again.

Thoughts of the best puppy ever created aside, Tommy would enjoy the aquarium while he was already here. They visited the rest of the animals, before moving on to actual fish. Tommy had never realized that fish could be so fucking *massive*! There were sharks, something Tommy knew existed but had never seen in person before. The descriptions he'd heard really couldn't do the creatures justice. They were enormous, and also very cute. Tommy pretended not to hear Techno laughing softly as he stared at the sharks in wide-eyed fascination, especially when one swam so close he could've reached out and touched it had it not been for the glass.

He had been equally mesmerized by the jellyfish, with the graceful yet aimless way they drifted through the water. He imagined what it would like to be so carefree. So free in general. Jellyfish didn't fight wars or get emotionally manipulated, they just floated around, fucked shit up, and ate! The pinnacle of girlboss behavior. Techno told him that they also do not have brains, which is a very rude thing to say about a girlboss. Tommy asked Technoblade if he hated women, earning a "HEH!?" for his efforts.

One of the funniest moments, in Tommy's opinion, was when he noticed a tank full of salmon. Tommy had grinned, turning to the boar hybrid. "Did you know W- My brother had sex with one of these?" He asked with faux-innocence, pointing to the red and green fish swimming in a circle around its tank.

Techno sounded pained. "He... *what*?"

"They were married though. So it was okay." The teen assured him.

"It's- He married a *fish*- Wait, *no*. I'm focusing on the wrong thing. That is very much *not* okay still! It's a *fish*!"

Tommy pretended to be confused. "Why? Because he was a man and the fish was a woman?"

"No... what? No. It's because it's a *fish*-"

Tommy abruptly burst out cackling at the absolute shock and disgust that had overtaken Technoblade's face. That was the usual reaction when someone found out about Wilbur's

dating habits, though nobody really questioned it so much. The man's mother was possibly a refrigerator, why fucking *bother* trying to make sense of any aspect of his life? The laughing seemed to clue Techno in that trying to explain how strange and wrong this was would be pointless, though, and they simply moved on to look at more swimmy guys.

There turned out to be a section with something called the "touch pool," full of a lot of wet creatures Tommy had never even heard of before. There were these things called "rays" that looked like if someone brought a small rag to life and made it aquatic. He loved them. The pool also contained "sea enemies" or whatever the fuck, which looked like weird plants but were actually alive. He touched one, only to reel back in shock when it started to close around his hand. He asked if it was trying to eat him, and Techno didn't answer. He just laughed. The bitch. Tommy would need to plot a revenge for this slight.

When they eventually exited the aquarium, Tommy found himself shocked at how much he'd enjoyed the experience. Normally, the smell of saltwater would've brought back some... *Unpleasant* memories, and possibly given him a bit of a panic attack. Today, though, he'd hardly noticed it over his excitement at all the poggers animals he bore witness to. Plus, when Techno wasn't being a dickhead and laughing at Tommy for no good reason, he'd actually been nice. Not overly nice, aside from when he was agreeing to every creature Tommy chose to go look at, but still nice. They had laughed and joked together, and the fun Tommy was having managed to overshadow the twinge in his chest at the familiarity of it all. He really hoped that his relationship with Techno in this world didn't end up anything like it had on the DSMP. He really did miss their friendship.

They also went out to get food, some hamburgers that were incredibly greasy and a thousand times better than the shitty overcooked steaks between bread that Wilbur made in his new van. Tommy also received a weird drink he'd never heard of before called "milk-shake." The drink was weirdly thick, something that had made Tommy hesitate at first. He did eventually opt to take a chance on it, and it was a decision he didn't regret. He officially had a new favorite drink. It was fucking fantastic, and he would have downed the entire thing in seconds if it weren't cold as shit. He could not tarnish his incredibly tough and intimidating big man reputation with something as stupid as brain freeze. Unthinkable.

It was already getting dark by the time Techno suggested they head back to Niki and Puffy's place. Tommy couldn't help but feel relieved that unlike Quackity, Techno didn't seem to require Tommy moving in with him as part of his sudden adoption. He was unsure if that was because he already had somewhere to stay, or it was just a Techno thing. Hell, for all he knew, Technoblade's house was literally just a death trap to everyone save for the boar himself. It wouldn't be out of character, if this version was even a *little* bit like his counterpart.

When the two arrived outside the bakery, they were met with the sight of a rather furious Niki. She was terrifying. It was equal parts impressive and intimidating how she managed to look so calm and collected while also being visibly full of rage. Her arms were crossed tightly across her chest, and the venomous glare she fixed Techno with was enough to make the boar hybrid flinch. Tommy subconsciously curled in on himself, backing up a couple paces.

“Technoblade.” Niki said the name coldly and with malice.

“...Hey, Niki.”

“Would you like to explain why I went upstairs, only to find you and Tommy *gone* and the window open?”

Techno laughed awkwardly “Well, you seeee, I decided to take Tommy to the aquarium, and-”

She looked unimpressed. “And you felt the need to sneak off, without telling me where he was, or if he was even with you!? What were you *thinking!* You gave me a heart attack!”

“...Sorry.” The boar replied lamely, shuffling where he stood.

Niki sighed deeply, most of the tension draining from her shoulders. She still seemed angry, though. Tommy remained silent, in the hopes that if he didn’t say anything he wouldn’t get yelled at. Shouting wasn’t exactly his favorite. It reminded him of quite a few things, all of them enough he wouldn’t even list the events mentally for fear that he’d get caught up in the memories.

“I- Just-” Niki pinched the bridge of her nose between her thumb and forefinger. “*Why*, Techno?”

Technoblade was visibly embarrassed, a fairly comedic image considering the untouchable and intimidating aura he usually gave off. Tommy probably would’ve laughed at him if he weren’t still somewhat afraid. “I, uh... I want to. Adopt.” The boar’s embarrassment grew as he continued talking, face turning a startling shade of red. “I wanted to adopt Tommy...”

Niki’s mouth fell open, and she blinked a couple times in rapid succession. She seemed almost offended. “Excuse me?”

“I’ve decided to raise him as my own.”

“No, absolutely not! Techno, that’s- That’s ridiculous!”

“Seems pretty reasonable to me.” He replied, affronted.

“You can’t just adopt Tommy!” Niki retorted angrily.

As it became more and more clear that nobody seemed to be upset at *him*, (a rare occasion) the argument was actually fairly entertaining. Tommy wasn’t really sure *why* Niki seemed to care so much about Techno taking him for a day out, but at least the teen himself wasn’t the subject of her ire. He’d count that as a win. This was probably a first for him, he couldn’t remember another time he’d been involved in something that somebody was angry about and didn’t shoulder a vast majority of the blame. He just hoped that Technoblade wouldn’t take this out on Tommy later. (It didn’t *sound* like something he would do, but this was an alternate universe. Tommy couldn’t be truly certain of anything.)

Techno tilted his head to one side. “And why not?”

“Because me and Puffy had dibs!” Niki blurted out, before gasping and clapping a hand over her mouth.

The damage was done, though. The words she’d spoken with enough clarity that they were unmistakable to both witnesses. Tommy and Techno alike reeled back in shock at that statement.

It was Tommy who responded first. “You fucking *what?*”

Niki laughed awkwardly. “Well, adoption isn’t something you should just spring on somebody, but...”

He threw his hands up in the air with exasperation. “Why does everyone in this fucking city feel the need to adopt me!?”

It was a couple days later, and the entire Tommy parenting situation had not really been discussed any further. Niki had informed Techno on no uncertain terms that he was *not* allowed to just take Tommy out on a surprise trip without telling anybody, and that declaring himself the teen’s father did *not* make it true. He’d agreed, before making a flimsy excuse and running out with his metaphorical tail between his legs (his actual tail sat like it normally did, but Tommy knew this was just deceptive behavior.)

Later that day, Tommy received a text from the pig himself with the message “I’m still your dad btw.” Just in case he’d been uncertain. While he doubted it would *ever* stop being weird to hear Technoblade refer to himself as Tommy’s father, he wouldn’t risk correcting him. Tommy had too much to lose. He’d never risk Shootboy for something so trivial. Also, the notion of being Technoblade’s son was fucking hilarious. He allowed himself to be adopted, as a joke. Like any average teenager would.

Based on the fact he didn’t get any unusual texts from Quackity, Karl, or Sapnap, it seemed that Techno had followed through on the unspoken promise not to report his location. Thank fucking Prime. Tommy really didn’t want to have to run again, but he would do just about anything if it meant avoiding Dream. He had dealt with *enough* of that bullshit for one lifetime, thank you!

It was around three-ish when Puffy let Tommy know Niki was going to have a couple friends over. He offered to leave somewhere, but Puffy told him that it wasn’t necessary. She even went on to make it clear that he was more than welcome to join. An unusual sentence for Tommyinnit to hear, but he wasn’t complaining. He kind of wanted to talk to people. Even if he was a bit paranoid and a *lot* terrified of being hurt, Tommy was also an incredibly social person. No matter how beaten down he got, that was a trait that never left him.

It turned out the “friends” were Technoblade and Jack Manifold. Certainly two of the men who had ever existed. Tommy had gotten along pretty well with pigboy so far. Plus, Jack hadn’t attacked him when he had the chance despite being a *literal* supervillain. For these reasons he figured it would be fine. Also, Niki trusted them, so that definitely counted for something. She might have placed trust in people she probably shouldn’t have back in the

DSMP (*cough cough, Wilbur*) but she wasn't stupid. It was because of all these factors that Tommy was willing to give the short bald man a chance.

He wasn't going to be polite, though. "Hello. I see that you are both short *and* bald. Very unfortunate."

"What the fuck, man?" Jack asked, visibly affronted by the introduction.

"I mean, he *is* correct." Techno pointed out, like the fantastic and supportive father he was.

"Fuck off! I'm *not* bald!"

Niki giggled into her hand, and Puffy quickly chimed in "Keep telling yourself that!"

"Why is everyone against me all of a sudden? What did I ever do!?"

"You stole a hotel. Bitch." Tommy replied very matter-of-factly, crossing his arms.

Everyone in the room turned to look at him, which was a bit uncomfortable. They all seemed to be confused or something, which was strange. Tommy raised a single eyebrow, looking between the group.

"How- Tommy, please explain, *how* would one steal an entire hotel?" Techno questioned, like an idiot.

"Well you wait for the owner to die, take the hotel, and don't give it back even after they stop being dead! It's very simple, really."

"...And how exactly do they *stop being dead*?" The boar asked.

Tommy waved his hand in a vague gesture. "You know how it is."

"I don't think we do?" Niki replied, but Tommy did not acknowledge this because it was her trying to prove him wrong, even though he could never be wrong because he was just far too cool and powerful.

After a few seconds, it became clear to everyone in the room that he would not be elaborating. They would simply have to move on. RIP to people who don't know about, (and have serious trauma relating to) the revive book, but Tommy was different! He was the smartest and poggest man in the room. He bet that none of them even knew how to open nether portals. L.

"Well, anyways... I guess I should introduce you guys. Tommy, this is Jack. Jack, Tommy."

"Ayup." Jack said, while still being bald.

Tommy nodded in acknowledgement. "Jack. Bit of a shit name, to be honest."

"Don't be rude!" Niki chastised lightly.

“No, he has a point.”

Niki gasped in offense at that. “Puffy! You’re supposed to be on my side!”

“I’m on the side of the *truth!*” The sheep hybrid stated dramatically.

The conversation continued similarly, with at least seventy percent of their talking points being somehow related to roasting a certain Mr. Manifold. Deserved, honestly. Despite the relentless bullying, Tommy didn’t really have anything against this version of Jack. At very least, he didn’t seem like a complete wrong’un. He was alright. Solid c-tier man, maybe a b-tier out of pity to compensate for his crippling lack of hair.

The entire thing was made a hundred times better by the fact Niki had made cookies for everyone. Prime, they were fucking amazing. No crafted cookie could attain even a fraction of the greatness these things possessed. They were called “macarons” and they were so delicate and airy, with a delicious creamy spread in the center. Every single compliment she received from her friends and girlfriend was very well-deserved. Tommy swore, every single thing Niki made immediately became the new best thing he’d ever eaten. He wondered what kind of witchcraft she had to do to attain this level of mastery over her craft.

The conversation organically shifted back to how short Jack was, much to his protest. Puffy stood on top of a chair to join in on the bullying. Girlboss behavior. Niki looked hesitant to get onto one of the stools, so Tommy opted to give her a helping hand. Pulling a block of netherrack from his inventory, he placed it on the ground in front of her.

“There, now you can be taller than him too!”

At the lack of response, Tommy glanced up to see everybody staring at him with wide eyes. Oh, what the fuck was it now? He swore to prime, it felt like every other minute people were looking at him weird for no reason. His eyes darted from person to person, finally landing on Mr. Manifold who seemed to be the most shocked of the bunch.

Jack finally spoke up, voice flat but holding a note of *something* Tommy couldn’t quite discern.

“Oh my god... you’re like *him*.”

Chapter End Notes

GUESS WHAT. It is my BIRTHDAY today. That's right. I'm a little guy. And it's my birthday. I'm a little birthday boyyyyy! You wouldn't ignore a little birthday boy, would you?/ref

As a gift, you guys should give me comments about what part of the chapter you like and what you think that ending means 🧐 🧐 /nf

No but seriously comments are my Favorite thing to receive i can NOT tell you how much they mean to me!! That's what tells me that people are enjoying the content I create! ESPECIALLY when you point out which parts you liked? It makes my author brain go !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

ALSO. If you are not a part of it yet, and would like to interact with me, why not join my discord server?

Link: <https://discord.gg/Jej8KsErGH>

GASP. You are still Here? Well, if you like my writing, you could consider checking out this original, non-fanfic short story I wrote! It's a fun little play at existential horror with eldritch horror elements (no descriptions of gore or violence whatsoever though, don't worry!)

Link: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/38904492>

"Him" reveal

Chapter Notes

Heyyyyyyyy girlies! This chapter is like. A fifth of the length I originally planned. There was gonna be way more scenes but... You know how it is with spaghetti.

Also HEY PSST. In the end notes I have linked my new fic and everyone has to read it please thank you ❤️

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*"Oh my god... you're like **him**."*

As those words gracelessly tumbled from Jack's lips, a tension spilled forth and quickly permeated the air like a thick smoke. It was equally suffocating. Nobody knew how to react to the statement, and all eyes turned toward the bald man desperately hoping for some sort of clarification.

For Tommy's part, he didn't know whether to laugh or scream. Of course. Of *course* there had to be some fucking- some little plot twist to interrupt what *had been* a normal and actually decent conversation. The sort of positive interaction he so rarely received, and it *had* to be interrupted by whatever this was. What a *fantastic* little life he led.

The teen attempted to run a hand through his hair, and was uncomfortably reminded that he desperately needed a hairbrush. (The last time he had access to one was during his stay with Quackity. While Puffy and Niki were nice, Tommy had just been too awkward to ask. It was becoming a problem. Finger combing can only do so much, especially for somebody with curls.) This one minor annoyance felt like the figurative straw that broke the trader llama's back.

Really, the universe itself seemed to have it out for Tommyinnit. Fuck the universe. It was probably just jealous of his stunning good looks and amazing personality. As everyone in the world tends to be.

The drawn out awkward silence was, quite fittingly, broken by the most awkward person in the room. Wilbur would probably be able to wax poetics about that, because he was eternally an overdramatic bitch (regardless of dimension.) That sort of pointless wordsmanship about ultimately meaningless things wasn't Tommy's style though, so he actually paid attention to the words Techno was saying instead.

"I've really gotta thank you for makin' this situation *more* confusing Jack, *exactly* what we were all hopin' would happen. This guy" -He gestured towards Tommy- "summons a *magical cube* outta nowhere, and you go and add *another* layer of mystery! Truly, where would we be without you?" The boar hybrid deadpanned.

Now, there was a lot to unpack in just those three sentences. Techno had just sarcastically quipped about Jack making the situation more confusing, but as Tommy had come to expect from the original version of the man, the pink-haired boar was a massive fucking hypocrite. For fuck's sake, Tommy was a *soldier*, not a scholar! He never even *went* to school! How was he meant to cope with the complexities of this predicament he'd stumbled into?

Techno's words themselves were one puzzle. Why was he so weird about a single block? 'Magical cube?' It was just netherrack!

...Ah, right. Netherrack. A block that was incredibly common, but only in the nether. But people in this world didn't *know* about the nether. That was probably it. Techno had never seen the block before, so he assumed it was something magical in origin.

Wait, *no*. That didn't really explain it. 'From outta nowhere,' it was just in Tommy's inventory? Like any other block? Even mobs like endermen and piglins could break and place blocks, though they apparently had to come up with simple enchantments to get them to stack and store properly since they lacked an inventory. But Techno, he was a hybrid. He should have one. What was he, a newborn? Everyone understands blocks and inventories! It's practically the first thing you learn as a child! Some of the most basic knowledge of all time! The sky is blue, the dark is dangerous, inventory is where you store shit, and blocks... do block things!

Also, the statement (along with the facial expressions of everyone present) made it abundantly clear that literally nobody aside from the hairless bitch himself knew what lovely individual Jack had been referring to with the very vague 'him.' A fact that made Tommy's emotions contradict themselves spectacularly, simultaneously feeling terrified and comforted. His fear being man's most inherent one, that inherent dread that always surrounded the unknown. As for comfort... Well, at least Tommy wasn't the only person left in the dark. Misery loves company, and all that.

As for the final detail he'd managed to pick up from the short string of dialogue provided by Technoblade, superhero edition. This had nothing to do with the words themselves, but rather the manner in which they'd been spoken. While to the untrained eye the boar's voice was just flat with a healthy slathering of sarcasm, there was something *more* in his tone. A hint of a negative emotion that was hard to pin down. Was it... Contempt? Distrust, maybe? Though that part wasn't *entirely* clear, Tommy still made sure to file the information away in the back of his mind. Just in case it ever came up.

While it had certainly been amusing, Techno's little comment didn't do much to alleviate the current tension in the air. Everyone was still locked in an odd sort of staring contest, like a group of rival endermen about to absolutely throw down. To be quite honest, Tommy was *not* obsessed with the vibes in the bakery right now.

Jack began to fidget more and more as the seconds ticked by with an agonizing slowness. The attention of every person in the room was fixed solely upon him. Tommy winced slightly in sympathy. While he may hold a bit of a grudge against Jack, (hotel thieving *bastard*) this wasn't something he'd wish on anyone but a true enemy.

Tommy knew all too well how painful it was to have so many people staring at you expectantly. That crawling itch under your skin when the spotlight would rest squarely on your shoulder. The unique discomfort of all eyes resting on *you*, a collective held breath lined with anticipation and waiting on your words. Knowing that everyone is laser-focused and listening intently, when you've got no clue what you're meant to be saying. Like an actor shoved onto a stage who never received their script, frantically trying to play the correct part lest they face the jeers of an unimpressed audience.

"Err, Niki?" Jack started, scratching the back of his head. "Is it alright- Is it alright if I borrow your son for a moment?" The bald man gestured towards Tommy with his free hand.

Niki opened her and closed her mouth several times as though trying to speak, eventually deciding to just give a single wordless nod.

As for the big man himself... "What the fuck!? I'm *not* her son!"

She only shrugged and grinned at him, in a manner so cheerfully Tommy couldn't even find it in himself to be annoyed. This felt like a bit of that 'emotional manipulation.' Except, since Niki wasn't a man, it was *womanipulation*. Also known as "straight up girlboss behavior." Something to be respected, certainly, though Tommy much preferred when he wasn't on the receiving end of it.

He glanced around the room, coming to an unpleasant realization. It seemed that now *Tommy* was on the receiving end of multiple expectant stares. Good. Exactly what he had wanted, slash ess. (Yes, he said 'slash ess' to himself in his own thoughts. It was a term he'd learned from alternate world Ranboo, a way to clearly express sarcasm. Tommy is so good at communication. Even if it *is* fully internal. That still counts, fuck you.)

Mind flooded by an irrational anger and the urge to stop being *looked at*, the teen's words were snappy and pointed. "The hell are you all looking at? What do you *want!*?"

"Um. Would you- There's... Someone I think you should meet. Would you mind if I took you to him?" Jack asked, visibly uncomfortable.

Tommy gritted his teeth. On one hand, that was sus as all *hell* and possibly a trap that would lead to his fourth-ever death. He *really* wasn't eager to return to the afterlife, seeing as it was total shit. On the *other* hand, he did not want to be in this room anymore right now. The vibes were off. Jack's offer? That was an out. An escape route, one might say.

Yes, his decision was *entirely* brilliant and tactical and not at all based on the mass amount of anxiety that was currently pumping through his veins in place of blood. Tommyinnit *never* does things without thinking them through. Except for when he does, in which case he cannot be held accountable for any of the consequences of his actions because he was simply having a little 'no-brain boy' moment. Those are *not* representative of his character, so they don't count. Yes.

So, Tommy nodded and followed Jack-supervillain-Manifold out of the familiar and cheerful environment of Niki's bakery and into the Great Unknown.

Or, more accurately, into a slightly beaten-up white car with what appeared to be smoke stains decorating the hood and windshield. He had clearly participated in the age-old and very real tradition of Car Barbecuing (carbecuing) which Tommy just made up at this moment. The only reasonable explanation.

The seats of the car were dark gray and had small rips in a few places, which revealed small patches of foam stuffing in an unappealing shade of yellow. Tommy felt a slight twinge of regret as he buckled himself into the passenger's seat, wondering whether it was the right move to agree to this little journey. It may not be his first time entering a vehicle with a practical stranger, but it *was* the first time he'd stopped to consider the possible repercussions of such an action. Huh.

Well, if worse came to worst, he still had that netherite sword in his inventory. No problem that a little ol' fashioned slicing and dicing can't fix, as Tommy always says. When in doubt, just start stabbing shit. Normal problems require normal solutions.

The drive was just as tense and silent as the bakery had been, and the regret in Tommy's stomach about going along with whatever Jack had in mind only multiplied with each passing second. The clicking noise as he drummed his fingernails against the car window was far too loud, and Tommy was uncomfortably aware of his own breathing. In short, this fucking *sucked*.

"So." Jack tried. "Placing blocks, huh?"

A+ small talk right there. Really... talking about things that were small and insignificant. Small talk for a small man. Fitting.

"Yeah?"

"Right. Blocks. Never thought I'd meet another guy who does... that."

Tommy looked at him strangely. "The fuck is that supposed to mean? Everyone can place blocks, big man." -A brief pause, before Tommy added in a tone full of fake empathy- "Were you dropped on the head as a child?"

Jack spluttered. "I- what the hell? No! Have you not- You didn't realize other people in our world don't have block physics? If anything, *you* were the one dropped!"

"Well I'll have *you* know that I was simply not held." Tommy replied conversationally, folding his arms.

Though his tone remained even, internally Tommy was reeling. Could people here *really* not use blocks? How the fuck did they *build* anything? He'd seen so many houses and other manmade structures, surely somebody must've created those! How else would they do that if not with blocks?

Wait. Wait hold on one fucking second.

He was focusing on the *wrong* detail.

“How the *fuck* did you know I’m from another world?”

Jack glanced at him momentarily, before returning focus to the road. “I mean, you placed a *block*. The only other guy who can do that is from another world.” He snorted. “S’not exactly rocket science.”

Tommy jerked backwards involuntarily, eyes widening as he stared at the bald bastard with a new intensity. “There’s... someone else here? From my world?”

“Yup.”

What the *fuck*.

Thoughts flooded Tommy’s mind at an overwhelming rate, making it difficult to process anything at all. Most of them were useless, a torrent of irrational fears. If others could *get* here... and someone was here already... would it be somebody he knew? An enemy? He had far too many of those... Would Tommy be in immediate danger the instant they arrived at whatever destination this car was currently barreling towards at unprecedented speeds?

Logically, he knew that probably wouldn’t be the case. While the server he came from was full of people who hated his guts for one reason or another, it wasn’t like the Dream SMP was the entire world. (No matter how easy it was to forget that at times.) The world Tommy came from was a vast network of servers, all but a select few heavily modded ones operating off of the normal block system. This would probably be some stranger. Some random stranger from some unknown server. The probability of encountering someone from the very SMP he’d entered this world (unwillingly or not) to flee was... well it was incredibly fucking unlikely.

...Right?

Tommy flinched as he felt somebody touch his shoulder. Whipping around, he watched as Jack Manifold quickly retracted the offending hand with an apologetic wince.

“Uh, you weren’t responding. Sorry. I was trying to let you know we’re here.”

“Right. Fantastic.” Tommy took a brief moment to calm his breathing down to an acceptable rate, before flinging the car door open with unnecessary force and stepping out onto the pavement.

Jack’s car was parked in front of an incredibly tall brick building. Was the other person from Tommy’s world (apparently the only person known to have Blocks) the one who built this? Did they build *everything* he’d seen in the city? Tommy knew megabuilds were a thing, but something like this would be a bit ridiculous. Even for someone as incredibly pog and talented as the legendary Grian from Hermitcraft.

Was Tommy stalling? Yes! He was not sure about this situation at *all*! Why did he even agree to come here!? Fuck you, past Tommy. Making decisions that would negatively impact your future self. Bitchboy. Now he has to stand here and distract a loser babyman named Jack in order to prevent himself from accidentally meeting an Enemy.

Stalling. Yes. A good smart thing to do right now at this time. He would just *love* to stall. Stalling is like balling but better because it's spelled with an S, a letter that also starts words like "Success" and "Stealing" and "Sex."

Stalling pog. His *beloved*.

"Ay, Jack?"

"Mm?"

Tommy was careful to keep his tone casual, to hide how he was very much stalling right now. He gestured up at the building. "Where have you taken me?"

"...I told you in the car where we were headed. Were you not listening?" Well, Tommy did *not* like how judgemental this man sounded.

"No I was not." He replied conversationally. "And *also*, die."

Jack made a face like he was constipated. Rip to that man. First god makes him short and bald and have no bitches, now he can't even shit properly. That's just sad. He needed charity or something.

"Ok, well first of all, fuck off." Jack rolled his eyes. " And also, we're at my apartment."

"I 'ave to say Jack, this is awfully *sus* of you. Bringing a minor to your apartment the second time you meet. Very *creepy*, if you asked me."

"Did you just say 'sus'? So he *wasn't* just taking the piss at me when he said the only video game on those comms of yours is among us? That's so fucked..."

Jack paused, before abruptly seeming to process the rest of Tommy's ramblings. "Wait. 'Second' time? This is" -He laughed uncomfortably- "We haven't met before. Oh! And uh. It's not like that. Don't be fuckin' *weird*. I'm trying to help you meet the other blocks guy. So you can... bond, or whatever."

No, Tommy would *not* stand for this. Jack was trying to gaslight him, and he wasn't even a girlboss *or* a gatekeep! Unacceptable!

"Don't you try to lie to me, you small carrot of a man. You're like a carrot that didn't get enough minerals or sun and it's wilted and tiny and tastes like dirt, but in a bad way and not a tasty mud way. Very cringe. I *know* we met before, in that fuckin- that fucking alleyway! You can't fool me, *Jack Manifold*. I am *the* Tommyinnit, and I am just unfoolable!"

The bald man gaped. The shock on his face quickly morphed to distrust, and the scowl overtaking his features made Tommy shuffle slightly backwards on pure instinct.

"How- how the *fuck* did you recognize me- I- *How do you know my full name!?*"

Tommy forced a laugh, putting his hand up in a submissive gesture. "Woah! Li- Listen big man! No need to get- get *violent* 'ere, right? We're just a couple of *pals*, you and me.

Buddies, even. Yeah?”

Jack blinked, taking a large step backwards. “Alright, calm down. I wasn’t going to fuckin’- *Attack* you, or whatever. But like, what the *hell*, man?”

The teen took a deep breath, forcefully calming himself. “It’s- There’s another version of you, in my world. Gave me some... insider knowledge, when I first saw you in your little villain costume.” As an afterthought, he added “Other Jack is a right bitch, if you were wondering.”

“There’s a... huh.” The furrow of his brow smoothed as Jack took on a more thoughtful expression, mumbling “He *did* say he saw some alternate version of people he knew. I guess it makes sense...”

Jack shook his head. “Whatever. Don’t tell anyone about the villain thing, obviously, but that’s not the fuckin’ point right now. Are you ready to meet the other guy from your world?”

No, absolutely not. Not at all. Not even a little bit. In fact, Tommy had been doing a *great* job stalling and would *happily* continue to do so.

Traitorously, his mouth said “Course I am, big man!”

Why the fuck did he say that? Bloody hell. He would be having *words* with his body’s autopilot setting later. Don’t pause to consider how absurd that sentence is. Not everything has to make sense. Just move on. Keep moving forward, like a minecart on a track that just keeps going and going and then hits Dream really hard and pisses him off-

No no, Tommy did not need to think about Dream right now. Or ever. At all. For any reason. In any context. Traumatic memories? Canceled. *Gone*. Locked away in the darkest, deepest pits of his mind. Like a ~~vault-prison-~~ nonspecific thing that locks stuff away for ever. Yeah.

Oh, they were walking. Walking up a long flight of stairs. Stairs with weird gaps in them, like they were made of slabs set about a slab apart each except they weren’t the proper spacing or thickness for that. They must’ve been custom carved. Why the fuck would someone bother custom carving weird stairs that were slightly more of a tripping hazard instead of just crafting normal ones? They looked to be stone, too, which was an absolute *bitch* to carve.

Jack was unlocking a door. He was opening the door. They were entering what looked to be a living space. Oh fuck, this was Jack’s apartment, which potentially might contain one of Tommy’s enemies. But probably not. Definitely not. He was just being paranoid. There would be no enemies inside.

No enemies at all.

None of them.

Jack opened his mouth and called out, presumably to the person Tommy was meant to be introduced to.

“Oi! *Scott!* I’ve got someone for you to speak to!”

Chapter End Notes

THATS RIGHT FUCKERS. ITS SCOTT SMAJOR, THE WHORESLUT SUPREME HIMSELF. Now all that's left for you to find out is WHICH Scott it is. Mans on a LOT of SMPs, yknow. Also, anyone who correctly guesses what Tommy and Scott's dynamic will be like gets free headpats.

Y'all saw "him" and REALLY thought it was gonna be Dream. You REALLY thought. Like.... guys,,,,, I wouldn't do that to you!

...No, that's a lie, I 100% would. I just didn't this time. Be afraid :)

Also. Hey, were you wondering where I went? Of course you were because my fic is amazing and you missed it. You were crying and sobbing and wailing on the floor of walmart. You weren't even there to shop, just to cry. You made a scene. It's okay though, the cashiers were doing the same thing. I'm very popular among the walmart community.

Well, finals were kicking my ass and I spent Three days with only Five hours sleep trying to finish my creative writing final project, which ALSO happens to be a syndicate-centric DSMPxALSMP crossover summer camp au. That you should read because it's really fucking good and I almost died writing it. Literally I went completely insane when writing ch 4-6 and those ones are gonna need HEAVY editing I was SOOOOOOOO delirious when writing them.

Anyways. [cocks gun] *Read the campfic:*

<https://archiveofourown.org/works/39658581/chapters/99280314>

When. When the. When he. #Girl

Chapter Notes

If you think my reply to your comment on the last chapter was a bit strange, silly, or wacky, that is just because i'm literally insane now. Be the horror beyond mortal comprehension you want to see in the world!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Eternity is a horrible thing.

Immortal beings such as elves and angels, who persist unless slain, tend to believe that they can understand its weight. That they have experienced and come to accept infinity, due to their lengthy lifespans. They're quite foolish in that way.

It wasn't until Scott died that he realized just how erroneous that belief was. The thousands of years he'd lived and died in a cycle of reincarnation paled in comparison to what lay ahead. How was he to know that even the loveliest of things would become downright torturous after enough time?

No matter how pretty or blissful their afterlife, for a person to exist eternally without the capacity for true growth or change was... it was awful. Unbearable.

He had never before stopped to consider how much he might miss that simple feeling of a broken fingernail or the stinging scrapes and bruises from an unfortunate tumble. But in a world without suffering, pleasure becomes the norm and normalcy becomes painful. What a tragic thing, to forget how to simply feel *okay*.

It didn't help how undeniably artificial everything became as the centuries wore on. His sprawling meadows and cozy domestic relationship splitting at the seams every time he peered close enough to glimpse the inconsistencies.

Or rather, lack thereof.

The same sentences repeated with precisely identical intonation one too many times. Flowers bearing petals just a touch more symmetrical than could ever be natural. Smiles ever-so-slightly *off* painted onto familiar faces. Those miniscule details that screamed *wrong, wrong, wrong* sticking in his mind stubborn as pine sap until he couldn't drown them all out anymore.

Because this wasn't right. This wasn't real.

Nothing here was *real*.

It had been hundreds of thousands, perhaps even *millions* of years (not that this meant anything in the face of eternity) when he finally cracked.

Scott was sure he'd been a pitiful sight. Fallen to his knees and curled pathetically inwards, body wracked with uncontrollable tremors. Hands held out in prayer, clasped together so tightly the knuckles were pale as bone. An attempt to quell their shaking. The snowy wings gifted by his god half extended to catch a breeze that didn't exist. Crystalline tears clung to the eerily flawless poppies below, blending with the evening dew. Pure desperation laced in his every word.

Pleading with Aeor to grant even a sliver of mercy. Whatever form that may take.

Whether it meant a return to that previous cycle of death and rebirth, or simply erasing him. Unweaving his very soul from the tapestry of the multiverse. *Anything*.

Anything at all to escape the unbearable torment of what was meant to be his happy ending.

Aeor had been *more* than merciful. The stag had chosen to be indulgently, *altruistically*, generous. Like the benevolent deity he was, Aeor made a grand sacrifice for his champion.

Summoning up those last fading remnants of power of a forgotten and unworshipped god, Aeor had pulled Scott from death's grasp and transported him somewhere new. A world where the elf could once again experience the thrills of life's twists and turns, the oh-so necessary and riveting nature of uncertainty.

Where Scott would be able not only live, but *thrive*. He could grow and change, encounter unfamiliar people and gain new experiences. He could rediscover the near-forgotten miracles of learning, of taking risks, of witnessing something *-anything-* for the very first time.

He could breathe again. He could truly *feel* again.

And wasn't that just the most unbelievable thing? That Scott had consumed the few remaining shreds of divinity from the very god he'd sworn unwavering fealty too, unknowingly and with such a selfish request?

It was difficult to feel the guilt of his actions while so overcome by relief and gratitude. By Aeor's grace and generosity, he was free.

His start in the new world had been difficult. It had been confusing, and even *scary* at times. Scott reveled in those feelings. Clinging greedily to those sensations he'd been too-long deprived of. It was nothing short of glorious.

When he'd first awoken in the world Aeor selected from him, it had been inside of somebody's home. Scott was immediately drawn in by what he saw. The architecture was unlike any he'd ever encountered before. The joy he felt at the realization was unmatched.

Scott had no clue how long he'd spent, just marveling at the unfamiliar material and design of the home. It was small, but had plenty of character. Small scorch marks decorated several of the furnishings, and the walls had been stained with ash and soot. It brought to mind a

certain explosive-loving emperor, and Scott smiled remembering the friendship they'd once shared. (While he was undeniably a petty and occasionally spiteful person, it was practically impossible to hold a grudge for so many years.)

Eventually, the apparent owner of the abode returned, entering through a window rather than the perfectly functional door. He was a short human man, donning a reflective silver jacket, large dual-colored goggles, and a head of oversaturated deep blue hair.

He'd been... less than pleased to find Scott inside. A small spark of energy had begun to form in his palm, pointed directly towards the newly-resurrected elf. Acting purely on instinct, he'd frozen the man in a large block of ice leaving nothing free save for his face.

The following conversation had been a bit tense, to say the least. There had been some critical misunderstandings, owed to Scott's total ignorance regarding the universe he now inhabited. How was he meant to know that there was an odd system regarding "heroes" and "villains," of which this human apparently fell into the latter category? Or that beings like angels and elves (of which Scott was both) were thought to be naught but fiction to this world's people?

As they spoke, the homeowner's anger and shock gradually gave way to a litany of other emotions, before finally settling on an exhausted sort of resignation. The two had struck a deal. (Not with destiny, though.) Scott was fairly uninterested in villainy himself, having grown tired of politics long ago, a weariness that never faded. But even still he agreed to be the man's "secret weapon." An emergency backup for dire situations.

It wasn't as though Scott were lacking in raw strength. While Aeor was gone, his power wasn't.

It was a vanishingly rare occurrence, for an angel to outlast their god. Many were under the false belief that for one to do so would make them a Fallen. That was not the case. To Fall was to have the divinity torn away, ripped from them by the very deity who had elevated them from mortality to begin with. Such a process left their soul broken and fraying at the edges, occasionally even resulting in the former angel's demise.

This was not what happened to him.

Aeor had not revoked his angelic status, (though perhaps Scott would have deserved it for the consequences of his selfishness) and Scott instead became an Untethered angel. While his god Fell, he didn't. Aeor's divine grace, his *legacy*, lived on within Scott.

He was still capable of performing miracles in his god's name, though the power was more limited. After all, Scott only held the fragment of Aeor that had been granted to him when he'd become his angel, his *champion*. He could no longer act as a conduit for the true might and divinity of his god, because that god no longer existed.

Thinking of that made him feel ill, though. He tried not to ponder it too much, instead putting his focus towards basking in the simple joys of living. He even embraced the perils, ones he faced more than a few times while upholding his end of the deal with the human.

In exchange for his aid in battle, the man educated Scott on the intricacies and culture of this world. It was incredibly different from anything he'd experienced before, but still he adapted quickly and with little difficulty. Scott was fairly well practiced in that sort of thing, having to learn and memorize countless foreign customs in order to create and maintain positive relations with other empires. Such were the duties of a responsible monarch.

Scott wasn't quite sure when he'd gone from viewing Jack as nothing but a contractually-bound ally and mentor in matters of normalcy, to a genuine friend. It was undeniable how he'd come to genuinely care for the human. He'd grown fond of Jack's loud and chaotic nature, even if it could still be a bit irritating on occasion.

Quite honestly, the chaos was one of the things Scott enjoyed. That unpredictability he'd lacked for so very long. It was impossible to guess what wild thing Jack was going to do next.

For example, when Jack threw open the door to their apartment with unnecessary force and a shout of "*Oi! **Scott!** I've got someone for you to speak to!*" the elf had absolutely zero clue what to expect.

Despite knowing it could be practically anyone, Scott still found himself blinking in confusion at the person he encountered when he finally reached the doorway.

Half-hiding behind Jack in a way Scott suspected was meant to be subtle, was a lanky blond teenager. After a couple moments of processing, he remembered that it wasn't normal for someone in this world to have quite so many scars. Especially not someone so young.

He also noticed how among the teen's litany of battle-wounds were marks clearly left by an enderman, which was exceedingly abnormal considering how there were no longer any living endermen in this universe's overworld (though he supposed it was *possible* that the wounds had simply been inflicted by a hybrid.)

"Jack." Scott hoped his tone managed to convey how thoroughly unimpressed he was at the moment. "Why do you have a child?"

"I'm not a fucking child! And he doesn't- he doesn't fucking *have* me, I'm just here." The child crossed his arms with a scowl.

Scott raised a single eyebrow. He was almost impressed by the way this teen managed to be so confrontational while also visibly anxious. This subtle insight into the kid's personality did nothing to illuminate Jack's reasoning in bringing him here, though. Scott opted to initiate an impromptu staring contest with his roommate until answers were provided, remaining pointedly silent.

After a couple unnecessary moments of tension, Jack took a step away from the child, pointing to him and blurting out "He's from your world!"

"...What."

“...Ayup. Name’s Tommyinnit, biggest man in *any* universe.” The child said with an awkward half-wave.

Jack started inching away, as if he thought it was okay to bring home a random child from another universe and then *not* explain. Scott was *not* going to just let that slide.

The elf crossed his arms, feathers ruffling in annoyance. “Jack. Like, *actually* what the hell?”

“Uhhhh this is Niki’s son, he places blocks, and I’ve just remembered I have very important villain things to do so-I’ll-see-you-later-bye!” His roommate rushed out, before dashing down the steps in a blatant attempt to avoid further questioning. Rude.

“He is literally *such* a liar. He doesn’t even have his costume! How dumb does this man think I am?” Scott asked, offended.

“You know Jack Manifold. Always a bit of a wrongun, that one. I reckon his incredible bitchiness is so powerful it’s managed to transcend universes.”

The elf laughed. “*So* true. We should totally tell him that when he gets back.”

While being ditched with a random inter-dimensional teenager hadn’t been on Scott’s agenda for the day, he wouldn’t say it was the worst possible turn of events. It was shocking, at the very least. For good or for ill, being surprised was a unique quality of life that he had come to thoroughly appreciate.

So sure, why not. He could roll with this. Like Jack before him, Scott would take up the reins of mentorship for a person struggling to find their footing in an entirely new world. After all, who could *possibly* be more qualified?

Fundy was acting very normal.

If he kept telling himself this, it would become true. He was manifesting it. Speaking it into existence. (Only in his own head, of course. Talking to himself out loud was not the kind of normalcore-boy behavior he was going for right now.)

He was being very normal, and nobody could tell he was anxious. Not even his own dad.

Especially not his dad.

...These self-affirmations were not helping as much as he’d like.

It was hard not to feel anxious around his dad. Especially recently. Wilbur had been getting more and more stressed as the days wore on, and Fundy couldn’t help but be afraid of the day that anger got turned on him.

Not that it ever had. Even if Wilbur was prone to snapping at people when under pressure, (Fundy had seen it more than once over Saturday family dinners) he was always careful not to misdirect his frustrations towards his son.

Even on the rare occasion that he did, it was never more than a few pointed words that he apologized for profusely after calming down.

He really was a great dad.

Fundy had been with Wilbur since he was eleven, his dad being barely twenty at the time. He still couldn't be quite sure *why* the hero had decided to foster some random kid, but Fundy was definitely grateful for it. It was really nice to finally have an adult who actually talked to him and cared about his happiness, instead of just being ignored or receiving bits of shallow small talk at the best.

Not that Wilbur was perfect, obviously. He could still be pretty dang annoying.

Due to his career in heroism, Wilbur was overprotective to a fault. Even though his identity as Alchemist was almost entirely separate from his personal life, it hadn't stopped a villain from connecting the dots enough to use Fundy as bait in a trap. They'd both managed to escape unscathed, but it had planted the seed in Wilbur's head that his heroism put Fundy in constant danger.

It had been only *one* instance, though. Not to mention that it had been two *years* since this happened. Plus, he wasn't made of glass. Fundy was more than capable of taking care of himself. None of his caretakers had ever bothered to drive him to and from school before Wilbur, so he'd learned at a young age how to be quick and clever to avoid getting mugged on the walk.

He was older now, and more capable. Even ignoring the fact nobody had even attempted to use him to get to Wilbur since that incident two years ago, he would probably be able to handle himself if something like that happened again. He'd done a lot of training (without his dad's knowledge) to be sure of just that.

As great as it was that Wilbur cared, it was stifling. He still treated Fundy like a naive little kid. Never letting him go anywhere by himself, and rarely permitting him to leave if he was going to be with friends his old age instead of a trusted adult. Hell, he was lucky his dad even let him keep his job.

Freezy Cold wasn't even the place Fundy wanted to work, but at least it was something. As much as he begged and pleaded to just be allowed to work at Quackity's casino, his dad insisted he had to wait until he was legally old enough. It wasn't like he'd be handling alcohol or working security, either! Quackity had offered to employ him as a dealer, and Fundy had wanted nothing more than to accept.

But always doing his utmost to ensure Fundy never had the opportunity to be hurt (or experience a shred of freedom) wasn't the only manifestation of Wilbur's overprotectiveness, oh no no *no!* There was also the emotional aspect.

Despite the fact Wilbur knew full well that Fundy was aware of his identity and all the things working as a hero entailed, he still had an annoying habit of hiding injuries so as not to worry his son. As if Fundy was just some little kid that wouldn't be able to handle it.

Wilbur also outright refused to talk about work. Even when it was *clearly* bothering him, like right now. He'd been getting more and more stressed out over the last couple weeks, but his lips remained sealed tighter than a stubborn pickle jar.

It was just frustrating, especially since Fundy knew he could help. He was smart. Whatever the problem was, he'd probably be able to come up with at least the framework for a solution. Even if he wasn't, it would still be nice to be in the loop. When your job is in heroism, any problems at work can affect people in the entire city. Being kept in the dark probably put Fundy in *more* danger, even if Wilbur refused to see it like that.

He was sick of being babied all the time.

So maybe, perhaps, Fundy had dabbled in a bit of classic teenage rebellion. Who could blame him? When faced with so much parental smothering, anyone was bound to lash out. At least it wasn't anything too extreme.

...Okay, maybe it was a bit extreme.

...*Very* extreme, actually. At least by most people's standards.

But Wilbur didn't *know*, and Fundy was pretty keen on keeping it that way. What he didn't know couldn't hurt him. Or majorly piss him off.

Yeah, that's why Fundy was currently just a giant bundle of nerves. He'd been carrying out his little acts of rebellion for almost a year now, and keeping them hidden really well. That didn't stop the faint anxiety that buzzed beneath his skin whenever he had a conversation with his dad. He really didn't want to get caught.

Days like this were a lot worse, though. When Wilbur would spend longer than usual at work, coming home with a gentle smile that did nothing to hide the slight furrow in his brow and the clench of his jaw.

If Wilbur discovered his little secret when he was already in such a terrible mood from work, he'd be absolutely *pissed*. Fundy would probably be grounded for the rest of his life, at the very least. The fox hybrid shuddered at the thought.

Tired as he was, Wilbur was also incredibly observant. It didn't help that his own sleep deprivation left Fundy far less capable of masking his emotions than normal.

"Everything alright, my little champion?"

"Yeah, Dad. I'm fine."

He *was* fine.

Wilbur wasn't going to find out.

Definitely.

After a lengthy discussion in which Tommy was made horrifyingly aware of how much weird shit he'd inadvertently done in this universe already, Scott had cheerfully declared that he was going to help Tommy acclimate to this world's culture. No matter how much Tommy had nagged the man and tried to force him to explain what the fuck that was supposed to mean, he never received an answer more specific than "Oh, *you'll* see!"

Scott was a bit of a bitch, but he had also dissed Jack Manifold with a practiced sort of ease, so he couldn't be *all* bad. Only a man of incredible culture like Tommy himself would participate in such distinguished pastimes.

So, Tommy made the decision to at least give this guy a chance to prove his worth as a teacher-figure. It would be nice to finally be able to do shit like use features on his phone besides messaging without twenty minutes of suffering and intense labor. Plus, it was nice having someone who'd presumably know exactly what aspects of this world Tommy would and would not understand.

"Sure. Teach me. I am ready to be full of the knowledges, Scott."

The elf grinned, clapping his hands together loudly. "Great! Alright, most important thing first. You and me- we're going a little *trip*. This is very important. Absolutely *vital* to your understanding of this world, trust me."

Well *that* was definitely sus as hell.

Tommy made sure the distrust was plain on his face. If Scott really was from his world, he'd probably understand. Everyone here seemed soft as hell, like they'd never even spent years in constant danger. While he'd heard some rumors that there were servers like that, he wasn't sure they held any truth.

"Is this a trap? You legally need to tell me if this is a trap. Otherwise that would entrapment, which is a crime." Tommy stated confidently, arms crossed in defiance.

Scott seemed thoroughly unimpressed by the teen's attempts at an intimidating glare. "It's not a trap, it's the first step in your official training."

On one hand, that was not really much less sus. On the *other*, he was curious as shit. This world was big and confusing and weird, and now that Quackity wasn't an option... Tommy could really use some guidance. He was man enough to admit everything would be easier if he didn't try to be a stubborn dumbass and to go it alone.

That didn't mean he was just going to agree off the bat, of course. He had some *demands*.

...One demand.

It was fucking *important*, though. Nobody could deny that.

Important enough Tommy decided not to bother phrasing it as a question. If Scott had an issue with this, he could fucking fight him. Tommy wouldn't hesitate to throw hands. Especially not when the stakes were so high.

“I’m going to bring my dog.”

“Sure. Where is it?” Good, it seemed Tommy wouldn’t be needing to get into a physical altercation on this fine day.

“He’s back at Niki and Puffy’s flat.”

Scott’s face morphed into a more thoughtful expression. “Alright. I can take you there to get your dog, or whatever, but there’s just... one *tiny* thing.”

Of course there was a catch. There always was, when somebody was doing nice shit for him. Tommy had learned to accept that truth a long time ago, but it didn’t mean he couldn’t still be a bit pissed off about it. Seriously, couldn’t things just be easy for once in his Prime-damned life?

“What.” He snapped.

“...So I’m *teeeschincally* not allowed to drive Jack’s car anymore.” -The elf gave a brief wince- “I mean, obviously I’m still *going* to, but like... don’t tell him.”

Oh, it was just that. Maybe Tommy had been quick to assume the worst. Hm.

“Alright, deal. Let’s go get my beloved precious Jeremy, king of my heart, god amongst men, ruler of all he l-”

“If you keep inventing titles I’m gonna make you leave the dog at home.”

“Fuck you!”

After spending several minutes searching increasingly unlikely locations, Scott finally located Jack’s spare car key wedged under one of the tiles on the bathroom floor. Tommy wasn’t sure whether to be impressed or terrified by the elf’s dedication. He could respect the grind, though.

They clambered into the car, Scott’s position in the driver’s seat forcing his oversized wings to press into the elf’s back in a way that just *had* to be uncomfortable. It seemed the seat hadn’t exactly been designed with winged folk in mind. Seemed like a massive oversight, in Tommy’s opinion.

Scott slotted the stolen key into the car’s... key-hole... thing, and activated the vehicle which came to life with a low rumbling sound. Tommy wondered briefly about the safety of this contraption. Now, he was by no means an expert on these things, but both Niki and Quackity’s cars ran a lot smoother than this.

A few seconds later, and he was worried about his own safety for an entirely *different* reason. Tommy was starting to understand more and more just why Jack had banned his roommate from driving. Every abrupt stop and chaotic swerve only heightened the teen’s anxiety.

“What the *fuck* are you doing!?”

“Relaaaaax. I’ve only crashed, like, twice. Plus, it’s way faster this way!” Scott lifted his hands from the wheel to give a dismissive wave, and they nearly careened directly into a light pole.

Tommy buried his face in his arms. “I can’t believe *this* is how I’m going to die”

“Oh, don’t be a baby. This is *fun*.”

“You’re fucking *mental*.”

Scott rolled his eyes, but to Tommy’s great relief he did start to infuse a bit more caution into his driving.

They finally arrived at the cafe, and he nearly flung himself out of the vehicle. The stale city air had never tasted sweeter, and the stability of the pavement beneath his feet was the best thing Tommy had ever felt. Relief flooded his veins that he had somehow managed to make that entire journey and come out the other end fully intact.

Holy Prime, that drive was going on the list of Top Ten Tommyinnit Trauma Moments™. A high bar, considering his life up to this point.

After every great trial and tribulation, life grants a reward for your perseverance. (<<<< That statement is not fucking true at all even a little bit.) In this case, Tommy was gifted the divine presence of his most beloved. His anchor in a sea of uncertainty. His world. The bright, shining star in a cold and unforgiving void. The one who truly understood him, better than any other.

That’s right, Jeremy.

His beautiful perfect Jeremy. The only dog of all time. King of Tommy’s heart.

As soon as he was done recovering from the perilous journey, Tommy had dashed upstairs at Mach 5 and scooped up the precious bundle of fluff into his arms with only the utmost care. He would sooner blow up L’manberg *himself* than harm Jeremy, even by accident.

...Okay, maybe not *that*.

But the point stood. Tommy loved this puppy so very much.

With Jeremy by his side, Tommy was unstoppable and infallible. There was nothing he couldn’t achieve so long as this perfect little creature continued to believe in him.

Tommy was not even ashamed to admit he’d gotten a bit distracted and spent ten full minutes just sitting on the couch pampering the small animal with the love and affection that he so clearly deserved.

When he finally returned outside, (after quickly informing Niki that he was off to do big man shit) Scott seemed to be a bit irritated by the wait. Sucks to be him, but the only person whose feelings Tommy cared about was Jeremy.

Yes, Jeremy counts as a person.

But like, a really fucking poggers one who isn't capable of lies or betrayal. Maybe Jeremy was actually just *better* than a person. Absolute icon.

Rather than just getting back into the car, Tommy gently and delicately placed his beloved puppy on the ground before drawing his netherite sword. He didn't point the blade at Scott, but made sure to hold it in a way that displayed his experience in combat.

"If my puppy gets hurt or scared even the tiniest bit, I'll cut off your fucking head."

The elf raised both hands in the air, but his expression didn't look all too intimidated. "Jeez. Okay, I get it! Don't upset the dog." Scott shook his head slightly. "*My Aeor*, you're worse than *Shrub*."

"...Who?"

"Not important. Now, let's *go*. We've got places to be!"

With more than a little reluctance, Tommy returned the sword to his inventory and retrieved the precious pup waiting patiently by his ankles. Satisfied he'd made his stance clear, he re-entered the car and shot a quick prayer to Prime that Scott would take his words to heart.

And he did! Take notes, children. Threatening people with deadly weapons works and there is absolutely nothing wrong with it. Want to achieve something? Try threats! Subscribe for more life hacks.

He wasn't even full of primal dread when they reached their destination this time, a marked improvement. Rather than making a mad dash to free himself from the giant hunk of iron and (probably) redstone that had almost become his tomb, Tommy took a couple moments to analyze the building.

It was made of brown bricks, with giant glass pane windows that made up nearly the entire front of the building. Even the *door* had somehow been made from glass! (Though the handle and frame of it were still iron, which was probably a good decision for its structural integrity.) Inside were quite a few people, which he wasn't too much a fan of.

But, this world was way more populated than the DSMP. Hell, it was more populated than even *Hypixel*, probably! If Tommy was going to be here for an indeterminate amount of time, that was just something he'd have to get used to.

Maybe that was why Scott brought him here in the first place! Exposure therapy, or whatever.

"So, uh." Tommy started awkwardly, realizing they'd been sitting in the parked car in total silence for longer than would be considered normal. "What is this place?"

"This" -Scott gestured grandly- "is Starbucks! Trust me, it's *very* important to your training. We are definitely not just here because I wanted an iced coffee."

Tommy squinted. "You are lying to me right now. That is *not* poggers."

Scott feigned a gasp. “What? *Me?* Nooo, I’d *never!*”

Rolling his eyes, Tommy shut the car door with far more force than necessary to express his frustration. He hoped it got fucked up and Scott got berated for a very long time by Jack Manifold. Would serve him right, lying bastard.

Anger bubbled within his veins, squirming beneath his skin like dozens of restless snakes. He knew it was rational. This was something harmless. Plus, even if it weren’t the *direct* goal, Tommy *could* probably learn something just by having an opportunity to openly observe someone who knew how to do normal shit in this world.

But. He’d been lied to. He was sick of always being *fucking* lied to. Lied to, and then treated in such a dismissive manner. Like he was just a dumb irrational little child. Just a baby throwing a temper tantrum.

God, Tommy wanted to punch somebody right now. Wanted to utilize what little he’d retained from Wilbur’s lessons on using words as weapons, to spit insults that would hit someone right to their core. Find those little festering wounds in their heart, their nagging insecurity, and pry them open bit by bit.

It was stupid. He was being fucking stupid. This really *wasn’t* a big deal. He shouldn’t be this angry.

He shouldn’t.

He *shouldn’t*.

But his feelings didn’t care about logic. The instincts honed by countless betrayals both great and small told him that this was a breach of trust, and deserved to be treated in kind. There was a bright white fire blazing in his chest, lapping at his ribcage. His head screamed to break something, to hurt somebody, just so the feeling would go away.

He knew it wasn’t right. He knew he needed to calm down. His anger had always been one of his greatest flaws (as Dream so dearly loved to remind him, always with that smug condescension buried beneath a layer of faux-sympathy.)

Fuck. That really wasn’t helping. Thinking of that fucking *monster* only gave more fuel to the raging inferno that scorched his bones, trying to consume him from the inside out. Just begging to be released in a bout of senseless and destructive fury.

Tommy squeezed his eyes shut as tightly as he could, petting Jeremy with delicate and carefully-measured strokes. He pictured the anger as a ball of noxious black smoke confined in his chest, and imagined it slowly pouring out through his nose with every exhale.

The tiny animal in his arms also aided in the calming of his irrational rage. He would never hurt his beloved Jeremy, and holding the pup prevented him from trying to harm anything -or anyone- else. The hard-wired instincts telling him that anyone he pissed off would use his beloved pet against him kept the wild and destructive thing clawing at his insides *contained*, unwilling to risk losing another pet even when lost to the turbulent seas of his own emotion.

Tommy was grateful Scott hadn't been attempting to speak to him, as it certainly wouldn't help the process.

After what felt like hours of petting his dog and repeating the breathing patterns he used for his panic attacks, Tommy felt somewhat normal again. He was still a bit angry, but it wasn't blinding and all-consuming like it had been moments before.

Honestly, the thoughts Tommy had while in that state made him sick. It reminded him of *Wilbur*. He swallowed hard, trying to ignore the ache that thought prompted.

He was sure his brother had experienced this same feeling.

The anger that tears you apart brutally piece-by-piece with a thousand clawed hands, screeching and howling until it gets too big to keep locked up inside your head and manifests in terrible ways. Breaking things, hurting someone for no reason, ~~blowing up a nation~~.

It had gotten worse over time. As if every new scar, every broken promise, every devastating loss was just fuel to that furious, destructive *thing* lying dormant inside him. It always made its presence known when it mattered, giving extra strength to his blows in the midst of combat.

But it also sometimes awoke when it shouldn't. Stirring at a minor inconvenience, or when another person made a small misstep. Sometimes it just decided to come to life for no reason at all.

Tommy had been trying to get better at controlling it. Trying to tune out the way his muscles would *ache* to jump into action, how his fingers would twitch for a flint and steel or else yearn for the weight of a well-sharpened axe. Trying not to let the feeling consume him the way it had so many times before.

That, Tommy thought, must be the difference between himself and Wilbur. Because even if the anger was the same, even if Wilbur felt that same guilt and disgust towards his own thoughts and actions, it seemed like he never fought to control it. To chain up those urges until they could be subdued and laid back to rest.

Maybe he had.

Maybe he just failed.

It didn't really matter, at least not anymore.

Tommy finally reopened his eyes, taking a couple moments to re-familiarize himself with his surroundings. He was leaning against Jack's beaten-up car, stood on the sidewalk in front of "Starbuck." Jeremy was safe in his arms. There were no immediate dangers.

His face felt hot, no doubt flushed from embarrassment along with the fading remnants of his irrational anger. At least his breathing had returned to normal, and his irritation had been reduced to a level that was actually appropriate for the situation.

Scott was standing a few feet away, lips pressed in a thin line. His feathers were fluffed to maximum size, but the large snowy wings were pressed tightly to his back despite having presumably exited the vehicle some time ago. He caught Tommy's eye and winced.

"I'm... sorry. I didn't mean to..." The elf trailed off, looking incredibly awkward.

Tommy inhaled deeply. "S'not your fault, not *really*. I was just- It's fuckin' stupid. Stupid thing to get mad about." He glanced away, mumbling a quiet "Sorry."

Scott forced a laugh, likely trying to brighten the mood. "Well I guess this means I'm paying for drinks, huh?"

"Oh absolutely. That's what you get, bitch."

"Oh, woe is me. Facing *consequences* for my actions."

Tommy let out a snort at the man's dramatics, and the two of them made a silent agreement to move on as though this had never happened.

He was glad Scott was willing to be chill about this shit, instead of berating or even just teasing him for overreacting. He *knew* it was dumb to freak out over small shit like that, having it pointed out again and again was just fucking annoying.

Aside from the crowds, (which weren't too overwhelming when he had someone to talk to and a magnificent dog in his arms to ground him) Starbuck was actually not bad.

It definitely didn't have the same homely or personal feel of Niki's bakery, but it was still pretty alright. The polished and practical interior of the place reminded Tommy of the Tubburger in Las Nevadas. It wasn't quite as gaudy, (nobody could be as extra as big Q) but the same sort of vibe.

Tommy's biggest gripe with the place would be the fact that it took *far* too long for Scott to translate the gibberish on their menu. He was incredibly glad the elf chose to make him pick a drink *before* they got in line, because he would've hated to make some poor employee deal with a line of angry and impatient customers just because Tommy didn't know the weird secret code words they used for "big" "medium" and "small."

He ended up getting an iced caramel ribbon crunch frappuccino, which was a monstrosity of sugar with a small amount of caffeine in it. He fucking *loved* it. Plus, he'd gotten to watch Scott pay for the drinks and subsequently interrogate him on how this world's currency worked. This little trip had turned out to be a great learning experience after all!

Finishing the rest of his drink with a loud and obnoxious slurping sound, he tossed the cup into the garbage and looked back up at Scott.

"So what now, big man?"

The elf tapped his chin a couple times, appearing thoughtful. Tommy thought it was kind of funny how his elven ears twitched while he was thinking. Kind of like a rabbit, or a deer.

Glancing from the ears to the large owl wings fidgeting along the man's back, Tommy couldn't help but feel a bit curious. He couldn't be a half elf, his ears were far too long for that. Plus, his facial structure just *screamed* "elven." At the same time, though, he knew it was incredibly rare for someone without majority avian blood to have wings, let alone ones large enough to function.

Was he an angel, then? He was from Tommy's world, which was one that several gods liked to play around in, including the elder ones. If he *was* some god's little chosen boy, though, why was he *here*? In a world it seemed deities couldn't give a *fuck* about?

He didn't get a chance to voice these questions, as Scott cleared his throat. It seemed he'd reached a consensus. Scanning Tommy up and down with his eyes, a grin overtook the man's face.

"Alright, are you ready for something *actually* important?"

Papers littered the desk, sitting in messy piles without rhyme or reason. There were only a couple of slivers of the well-polished mahogany visible beneath the mess, to say nothing of the pens and other similar items obscured beneath the mountain of white. Countless reports, files, and notices, all equally urgent and demanding of attention.

Occasionally the papers would slide off their haphazard stacks, tumbling ungracefully to litter the floor. Several of the file cabinets were left open, their interior similarly disorganized. Four mugs sat empty on various surfaces, deep brown coffee stains painting their insides. A vase on the shelf at the back of the room held a half-dozen yellow roses, all dry and brittle. The wilted blooms were overdue to be replaced.

The office's current state of disarray was a sharp contrast to the precise tidiness she usually maintained. He believed that having a clean workspace boosted productivity, and there was always plenty of work to be done. Not that any level of cleanliness would provide the solution to their current problems.

The room's sole occupant was currently slumped forwards face down onto their desk, a perfect image of defeat. It was hard not to crumple under the pressures of a job like this. Knowing that countless people were dependent on them to make the right decisions, create the perfect solutions. Even a simple mistake could potentially harm thousands of people.

It was exhausting.

So, Eret would allow himself a few more moments to wallow before returning to work.

She'd never been under the false impression that being mayor would be an easy job, but it was an important one. They'd dedicated their life to trying to improve the quality of life for people in this city, and many of their efforts had paid off.

Some of their changes were small and superficial, minor boosts to general morale. For example, changing the city's name from "Not a Very Good City" to "Good City." (What had

the founder been thinking, naming it that? Why had nobody bothered to change it until them?)

Others were actually more significant, more impactful. She had to fight tooth and nail for every inch of ground on the argument, but Eret had slowly been able to get more hero presence in the city's outer ring. The corruption within the city's politics ran deep, but he had an unwavering devotion to his people and wouldn't rest until they'd done everything they could to make things better.

Up until recently, the only part of their job that had provided any real trouble was trying to get things done despite the pushback from city council members who had a vested interest in ensuring prosperity only ever graced the already wealthy. While there had been one or two more immediate issues during Eret's time in office, she'd mainly only ever had to worry about reforming flawed systems.

Over the past month, that had changed. Suddenly they were being swamped with more and more reports about spikes in the violent crime rate, missing persons, and even assassination attempts targeting politicians and heroes alike. It was clear that *something* was brewing, but they still didn't have the faintest clue of *what*.

They were receiving reports from the hero agency with increasing frequency about oddly coordinated attacks, with the variety and persistence of the perpetrators implying that something much larger was at play. To call it concerning would be an understatement. She had so little information, and it seemed like the mounting pressure put onto the heroes' shoulders might soon become too much for them to handle.

While it wasn't technically their job to worry herself with the actual investigation, Eret still poured much of her free time into reviewing tapes and statements regarding the attacks. He was desperate for a solution, one to alleviate the constant strain on city resources.

Because being mayor required making hard decisions, especially at times like this. Was it morally right to divert funding from vital areas like infrastructure or education into the hero program, even if it seemed that something major and potentially catastrophic was in the works? What was really more important, quality of life or protection from the impending threat?

If they had more information, maybe he'd be able to make a more effective plan of action. How do you defend against an invisible enemy? The list of unknowns about the situation could fill a river.

When captured and interrogated, the people involved in these attacks always offered nothing but a single response. It didn't matter what question they were asked. Every single one of them said the exact same phrase, spoken in the exact same tone. A cryptic seven-word message that provided nothing but a feeling of unease.

"By its grace, we will be saved."

There was only a single connection between the people who'd been apprehended, and Eret was unsure of what to do with the information. A very statistically unlikely number of

perpetrators were enderian hybrids. This was only noticeable because enderians were incredibly rare, and the fact that several of them were apparently involved in... whatever this was.

It didn't feel like a coincidence.

But at the same time, it wasn't like they could act on this information. What would they even do, round up and interrogate every enderian they could find in the city? To do so would be discriminatory and generally unethical.

Despite how they wracked their brain for any other information they might be missing, any dots waiting to be connected, she found nothing. It terrified him, the rate at which things were progressing and how powerless they were to prevent it.

The heroes had no clue either. Alchemist had reported some suspicions regarding involvement from the Winged Alliance, but these sorts of targeted attacks by highly-trained individuals just didn't fit their MO.

The trio were notorious for never working with other villains, and their presence was far flashier. Their attacks were as much for show as for achieving their goals, and Eret just doubted they'd one day suddenly decided to switch to assassinations and gangs of trained attackers.

Midas along with a couple others had theorized the possibility that villains were starting to organize and unify in a way similar to the heroes. Not only was it a terrifying thought, but it seemed *plausible*. That was probably the main reason the mere thoughts sent icy chills down Eret's spine.

While some (such as the Winged Alliance) were adamant about keeping to their own little groups, it wasn't exactly unheard of for unassociated villains and criminals to lend one another aid if they happened upon a fight in progress. These occurrences were largely random and unpredictable, but incredibly frustrating as they more often than not led to the villain slipping away. If they were to become a regular occurrence...

It would be terrible news for the city as a whole. The main reason the heroes were able to protect people so effectively was their ability to call on each other for aid, and the way they trained to move together as a cohesive unit during a fight. Being able to rely on each other granted them strength, making the villains and criminals far more manageable.

Whether this theory held merit or not, one thing was certain.

She had to get back to work.

Eret sat up, running a hand down his face and taking a deep breath. She sifted through the clutter on her desk, picking out a report on Mycelium's latest encounter with one of these attacks. They scanned it carefully, searching for anything new or useful. Anything at all.

Maybe if she just kept working, they'd eventually find something.

He certainly hoped so.

The familiar click of his shoes against well-polished black tile flooring brought a smile to Scott's face. There were racks adorned with quality clothing as far as the eye could see, as well as a multitude of mirrors and a couple kiosks housing stylish accessories. The yellow light and dark wooden walls gave the sophisticated establishment an almost homey feel.

It certainly felt like home to him.

While it may sound shallow, clothes were important to him. They reminded him of his life before.

As an empire that specialized in textile exports, it was unsurprising that Rivendell had developed such a thriving fashion industry. You'd be hard pressed to find an elf in the kingdom who couldn't sew with the proficiency of a professional tailor. The clothing made in Rivendell was the finest of any empire, something they prided themselves on.

What you wore was important on both a social and personal level. When attending an important event, it was customary to wear something made by yourself or a loved one. Gifting fine clothing was an important ritualistic part of any relationship, the time spent on the article signaling their closeness. For a new friend, it was customary to purchase clothes that you felt suited them.

Scott clung to every memory he had about Rivendell culture with desperation, terrified to forget who he'd been before that lengthy stay in the afterlife. He upheld every ritual and celebrated every single holiday he could remember, even those less important ones that had often fallen to the wayside in favor of his duties back when he was still emperor.

Because even if Rivendell was gone, the memory of it wasn't. It brought comfort to know that he could still keep their culture alive, that Exor's corruption couldn't truly take this from him. The empire and the god they worshiped may both have fallen, but their spirit lived on through Scott.

He still fondly remembered Jack's confusion and bashfulness the first time Scott had gifted him with a hand-tailored garment. It had been both a symbol of their connection, as well as the gratefulness the elf felt when his friend had helped him to decorate the apartment for winterfest despite the holiday not existing in this world. That jacket was still part of his roommate's villain costume to this day, something that never failed to make Scott smile.

All sentimentalism and cultural significance aside, clothes were just fun. How a couple pieces of fabric allowed you to drastically alter the way you were perceived in the eyes of others. The feeling of joy from knowing you looked fabulous as hell. Looking in the mirror and being happy with what you see. What's not to love?

It was some combination of these things that had led to Scott bringing the child here. Probably one of his favorite locations in this world.

The human fidgeted uncomfortably, shifting on his feet “What are we meant to be doing here, exactly?”

“You’re a teenager.” Scott started, a large smile on his face.

“...And?”

“*And*, it’s finally time for the moment every teenager in this world dreams of: Your makeover montage!”

The child blinked for a few moments, processing. His eyes darted around the multitude of colorful garments surrounding them, before returning to Scott. It was honestly hilarious how confused he looked. Really, how hard was it to grasp the concept?

...Admittedly, the fact Tommy had never watched a movie in his life and was therefore oblivious of this wonderful trope didn’t help. Still, Scott was determined to give him his indie coming-of-age film moment.

He was such a great mentor.

“Hmm. Only one question. What the *fuck* is that supposed to mean?”

Rather than explaining, the elf simply offered a non-committal hum and began browsing the racks of clothing in search of something he felt would suit his new student. The clothes Tommy had now fit poorly, and were designed for comfort over looks. While there was nothing *wrong* with comfortable clothing, Scott felt the teens confidence might benefit from a wardrobe change.

“So this is just- we’re just fuckin’ shopping?”

Scott examined the top he’d pulled from the rack for a few seconds before returning it with a small shake of his head. “We are not *just* shopping. We’re finding you a new *style*.”

He glanced back up at Tommy, who still looked incredibly confused. “But... *why*?”

The elf adjusted his wings, trying to decide how to answer. He could provide any multitude of complex justifications. Share details about the cultural significance that buying someone a new outfit held for him. Admit that it was meant to symbolize the start of a friendship. They may not be on the hand-made custom clothing level yet, but Scott still felt they could be close one day.

He didn’t say any of this, though.

Instead, he replied with the simplest explanation. “Why *not*? It’s fun, and it can make you happy.”

Tommy seemed to accept this, even beginning to reluctantly cooperate as Scott flitted from rack to rack in search of a new look for the little human. It should be something that matched Tommy’s personality, bright and bold and loud. Attention-grabbing.

He discovered almost immediately that anything green was a definite no-go. That wasn't much of an issue, as Scott didn't think the color really suited his mentee anyways. Tommy seemed more like someone for warm colors with high saturation.

They tried out a few outfits, and as time passed the teen was quickly growing more and more enthusiastic. He went from glaring at mirrors and offering half-hearted "sure, whatever"s to actually showing off and giving detailed criticism about the ones he didn't like. Even when loudly complaining, the light in his eyes made it clear he was having fun.

By the time they finally landed on an outfit he really liked, Tommy was grinning brightly. The clothes definitely suited him. They were bold and eye-catching, without sacrificing comfort. He seemed genuinely happy, something that Scott was proud of.

The baggy (and slightly stained) yellow sweater had been traded for a hot pink cropped t-shirt and a quarter sleeve black varsity jacket that he wore pulled down so the cuffs hugged his wrists and the body of the garment hung loosely off his back. The baggy sweatpants were replaced by a pair of black shorts that stopped at his mid thigh, made of a stretchy material that wouldn't hinder his mobility.

While the shoes weren't exactly the most practical, Tommy seemed to accept that because of how "badass" they looked. A pair black platform boots, with bright cyan laces that matched the accents on his jacket. (And yes, maybe Scott had picked out the cyan for sentimental reasons.) The pink knee-socks added to his color coordination, helping the outfit feel cohesive and carefully-constructed.

With the clothes themselves picked out, they moved on to accessories. While the outfit would still look good without them, cute accessories added a lot to a look. Plus, *these* accessories (probably) wouldn't have any demon-brother souls trapped inside them. Always a good quality in a piece of jewelry.

Tommy's right ear was pierced, so Scott let him pick out an earring for himself while he went to look at necklaces. They both spent more time than was probably necessary to make their decisions, eventually re-convening near the sunglasses display to share their finds.

The earring selected was dangly, made of a matte black metal and forged in the shape of a heart. Scott definitely approved. As for the necklace, he presented Tommy with a simple golden chain that had a stylized stag head pendant. While he didn't explain the significance, there must have been something telling in his eyes judging by the way the teen's smile softened slightly.

"Y'know I thought this would be stupid, but it's actually really fun."

"See? I *told* you!" The elf teased playfully.

Tommy crossed his arms and scowled, though the way the corners of his mouth kept twitching upwards rendered it pretty unconvincing. "Yeah, yeah. Don't make a big fuckin' deal out of it."

"No, actually, I think I will. I was ri-ight~!" Scott sing-songed cheerfully.

“You are a right bitch.”

“Mhm!”

Tommy gasped suddenly, attention flying to something on the rack next to them. He reached out quickly, grasping a pair of sunglasses and fitting them on his face. Turning to admire himself in the mirror, a huge smile overtook the teen’s face.

“Look how fucking *cool* these are!”

The “these” in question were a pair of heart-shaped sunglasses with rose-tinted lenses and thin golden wire frames. They matched the rest of the human’s outfit nicely, and the combination of gold accents with the cyan he wore sparked some fond memories. Scott completely approved of the choice, and felt that he was becoming a great influence on Tommy’s fashion sense.

“You want to get them?”

“I- really!?” Tommy’s grin was infectious. “I mean- that’s right, *bitch!* You’re buying me these poggers sunglasses whether you want to or not!”

“Oh no, I’ve lost my free will. Whatever will I do?” Scott lamented, earning himself an eye roll that was barely visible from behind the colored lenses.

The shopping trip was definitely a rousing success. Not only had the teen unlocked a new and infinitely better style, they’d also found time to discuss things like customs and world mechanics for this universe. Like peoples’ lack of inventory, and how they couldn’t pick up or place blocks. Scott struggled to suppress his laughter when he found out that in his several weeks here, the teen had yet to notice that nobody else was operating on the same logic as him.

It was hilarious, honestly. Scott was an ancient elven king who also happened to be an angel with divine magic. A combination of several things that just didn’t exist in this world. Yet, he’d somehow done a significantly better job blending in than this human teenager.

Just goes to show the importance of observational skills, he supposed.

Scott glanced around briefly, but didn’t really see anything he wanted at the moment. Plus, his mission to get Tommy better clothes was already fulfilled. He’d accomplished his goal, and very well at that. He turned back to where the human was busy cooing at the tiny dog in his arms.

“Is there anything else you want before we leave?” He asked, mentally summoning up a view of his inventory to retrieve Jack’s credit card.

To Scott’s surprise, Tommy nodded aggressively. “We need to get something for Jeremy.”

Oh Aeor, he’d nearly forgotten what a nightmare children were. However could Scott have made such an incredible error? The follies of man may be great, but even immortal beings

were flawed and susceptible to the whims of their own brains. The mind of any being, mortal or otherwise, was inherently an imperfect storage device for memory.

“Tommy. This isn’t a pet store. They don’t *have* stuff for dogs.”

The teen pouted, holding his dog higher in the air. The creature gave a quiet bark, tail wagging enthusiastically. It wiggled a bit in Tommy’s hands, licking the air and blinking with big, shining eyes. The thing was *unfairly* cute.

“Look at him! He *deserves* it! You wouldn’t want to disappoint this poor innocent baby boy, would you?”

“...This is manipulation.”

Tommy snickered. “Did I ask?”

He let out a long-suffering groan, but still cast his eyes around in search of something to appease the child. Playing along would be significantly easier than attempting to argue. There was a reason Scott normally avoided dealing with people’s children. Oh, well. At least it was *Jack’s* money.

His eyes fell briefly onto the bracelets, but the thought was quickly dismissed. The dog *already* had a collar, and a bracelet around its neck would probably be a choking hazard or something. The boutique didn’t have infant clothes either, only catering to teens and young adults.

Finally, he had an idea. Motioning for Tommy to follow him, he led the teen over to a large table covered by an assortment of handbags of all shapes and sizes. Hopefully this would be deemed satisfactory.

Confusion was evident on Tommy’s face, so Scott decided to be gracious and provide an explanation. “You wanted something for the dog, so... You can get a handbag to carry it in. Like a little ride, or whatever. It’ll be super cute.”

“Excuse me, *he* has a name and you *will* respect him.”

Scott raised an eyebrow. “So you *don’t* want to get a bag for him?”

“No no no- Well, wait- hey- *hold a second* big man. I never said *that*.” Tommy rushed out his words as quickly as humanly possible.

“That’s what I thought.”

The teen looked like he *really* wanted to spit more insults, but instead gave a half-hearted scowl and devoted his attention to finding a perfect carrying case for his pet. Scott was glad he’d managed to produce a solution so quickly. Scott wasn’t exactly an expert on human aging, and he didn’t want to risk the kid having a temper tantrum or something.

Do humans this age still do that?

Eh, it didn't matter. Better safe than sorry.

Tommy eventually reached a decision, picking a black leather handbag with golden straps and buckles. It was a bit on the larger side, and plush enough the dog would probably be comfortable inside. Scott appreciated how well it matched the rest of the look.

Taking a moment to appreciate the fantastic outfit he'd helped create, Scott was struck by a thought.

"You look like you could belong in Mean Girls right now."

Tommy tilted his head to the side. "In what?"

"It's a movie." Scott explained. "I'm saying you look like the pretty popular girls who would, like, spread nasty rumors about people and stuff."

He grinned at that, turning to admire himself in a mirror again. "*Hell* yeah. I am on my toxic girlboss arc. Just because I'm the biggest man in the world doesn't mean I can't be #girl."

"So true, king!"

Tommy's smile faded a bit as he continued to study his reflection. There was a subtle shift in the air, and Scott couldn't pinpoint what had caused it. It seemed important though, so he kept quiet and allowed the teen time to think.

When Tommy finally spoke, his voice was softer than usual. "I used to really hate looking in mirrors, y'know?"

Scott gave a wordless hum, prompting the teen to continue.

"It's like- I'd look at my reflection but after a while it stopped feeling like myself. It just felt like looking at a fuckin' - a compilation of all the shitty stuff that's happened to me. Especially this *fucking* thing-" He reached up to tug at the streak of stark white nestled among his golden curls, fist tightly clenched as though he were fighting the urge to rip it out.

Tommy sighed.

"And- and all of that- it's still *there*. Some of the scars and shit are actually *more* visible now. But that's- It's not the part I immediately focus on, right?"

He finally tore his gaze from the reflection, turning around to look Scott in the eye. There was something almost desperate in his expression, like he needed to know that this was real. That the things he was saying and feeling actually made sense.

"Yeah?" Scott replied gently, an acknowledgement and encouragement all at once.

"Cause like- It- The-" Tommy tripped over his words, struggling to voice his thoughts. "Whenever I'd get new clothes- Or, not *every* time, but when I'd get actually *nice* ones. Like ones that looked *good*, it always had to be for a *reason*."

Tommy's gaze slid to the floor, the hand not holding Jeremy's bag reaching up to tug at his sleeve.

"There was the special outfit Wilbur bought me for my thirteenth birthday, but that was basically just- It was mostly to prove to Phil that he was more responsible of a caretaker to me than the old man was to *him*. It was all spite. And then there was the L'manberg uniform, but that was for the country. For *Wil*." He took a deep breath. "I have- I still have the suit I made myself. I hate suits, but I liked that one. And *that* was just for the stupid fuckin' casino..."

He turned back towards the mirror.

"It's always- Well, it was never just about *me*, you know? It was always for something- *someone* else."

Scott noticed the boy's gaze flit over to him in the mirror, and gave a reassuring nod.

"I guess it isn't really about the clothes." Tommy bit the inside of his cheek. "It's- it's *me*, innit? I've always been- I'm always *following* someone. Even when I try to pretend I'm not. I'm always like- I'm like an accessory to whatever other person bothers keeping me around and telling me what to do. Because it's just fucking *easier*."

He inhaled shakily, pulling at his sleeve with a bit more force.

"But this-" Tommy uncurled his fist from the black fabric, gesturing jerkily towards his outfit. "This is- The shirt, right? I chose that one. I chose the color because it was fun, and then looked until I found one I liked. And I also picked the shorts and the boots and the earring and the glasses and the *bag*-"

Tommy took a moment to catch his breath. His eyebrows, which had been tightly knit together with emotion, relaxed slightly. He gave a fragile breathy laugh. Scott noticed a tiny, shaking smile worming its way onto the teen's face.

"And the best part-! The best part is it doesn't fucking *mean* anything! It doesn't prove something, it's not a fucking *symbol*, it's just- It's just *fun*! It's just for *me*." The last sentence was spoken reverently, his voice sounding almost near tears.

Tommy placed a hand on Jeremy's head, stroking the dog with only the utmost care and affection.

"I think... I always thought that it was easier to take orders from somebody. To let somebody else make all the- All the fucking choices. Tell me what to do, where to go, who to fight. Because then I wouldn't have to think about it, I could just let someone *else* do the thinking. But..."

He scratched behind the puppy's ears, earning an appreciative yap.

"But maybe it wasn't easy. Maybe living for other people instead of for me was always just- It was always just really fucking *hard* but I never realized it before because that was all I

knew.” A bitter laugh. “Prime, I’m so *stupid*.”

“Sometimes...” Scott finally spoke up. “Sometimes you end up doing the wrong thing because you didn’t realize you had any other options.”

The teen scoffed. “I- It’s not like I didn’t *know* I could think for myself. I was just so-”

“But did you feel like it?” Scott interrupted.

“What?”

“Did you *feel* like you had any other choice?”

Tommy was silent.

Scott stepped forwards slowly, placing a hand on the teen’s shoulder in an attempt at comfort. Tommy flinched slightly, but quickly relaxed into the touch before Scott could rethink his decision.

“Thanks for... y’know...” Tommy trailed off with a vague gesture, face colored by an embarrassed flush.

The elf smiled warmly. “Of course!”

A pause.

Scott gasped, a sudden smile overtaking his face. “Oh my Aeor. We just did a shopping trip makeover montage. Do you know what this *means*?”

“N- no? Should I?” Tommy looked vaguely concerned, glancing around quickly.

“We’re officially *besties* now!”

The teen’s shoulders dropped slightly, apparently realizing there was no immediate danger. His lips quirked upwards. The laugh that escaped him was slightly strained, but genuine nonetheless.

“Besties, hmm?” Tommy questioned.

“Uh-huh! Now we can go bully and judge people!”

The grin returned to Tommy’s face. “Lead the way then, king.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delayyyyyyy i did not want to write and so i didn't <3

Like literally how am i supposed to work on this when i'm hyperfixated on four different smps and dream smp isn't one of them? What is "It was never meant to be" in the face of "Branzy, I give you my four." or "You deserve this more than me. Tilly death do us part, Pearl!" or even "Today. I need to find a way. To Kay my Ess!" (Not to MENTION whatever the hell is going on with Sausage and Joel's child.)

This chapter is long as Fuck. It was gonna be like double the length but instead i went insane over double life and also wrote a very silly afterlife gem dimension travel fic for a gift exchange!

You guys. Listen here. I'm grabbing you by the shoulders and pulling you closer right now to ensure i have your full attention. You people. All of you. You're like squirrels to me. Not in the way that you aren't allowed to get married, but in that i think each and every one of you is valuable and precious. ESPECIALLY after the economic disaster my friend told me about that happened after my unjust execution. Okay? You guys are the most valuable squirrels around. Sparkly, Rat Eared, Short tailed, and the color of pure mustard. You have mohawks, each and every single one of you i promise. I would never put a hat or glasses on you to cover up your true power. I would show you off to the world, I would possess your body for candy adventures or the one party i actually care about. You're the best squirrels and i hope you remember this.

^^^To anyone who truly understood this rant. I'm so sorry. Also you're not allowed to judge me for my dark and troubled past <3

...Anyways, here's some really cool fanart of tommy's new outfit ^-^!
<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/view/nyanbinary-87/690929256602157056>

End Notes

Me writing yet ANOTHER fic? In this economy? It's more likely than you think!

Also. JOIN MY DISCORD SERVER: <https://discord.gg/zMv9d7XdH3>

Works inspired by this one

[Welcome to Gotham!](#) by [impravidus](#)

[The Eggpocalypse's Lone Survivor's Adventure into Normalcy](#) by [impravidus](#)

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